THE CHILLING ARCHIVES OF HORROR COMICS!™
YOE® COMICS
FORELOCK the WARLOCK
HAUNTED HORROR™
#13

MADAM CLIZIA
FACE IT, FANBOY: YOU JUST GOT JINXED! YOU FANGIRLS, TOO! YOU HAVE JUST BOUGHT OUR UNLUCKY 13TH ISSUE AND ARE NOW DOOMED! YOU COULDN'T BE MORE UNLUCKY IF YOU HAD A BLACK CAT CROSS YOUR PATH WHILE WALKING UNDER A LADDER! YOU ARE DOOMED TO HAVE A LIFE DEVOID OF ALL MEANING AS A COMIC BOOK COLLECTOR LIVING IN YOUR PARENTS' BASEMENT, DOUBLE-BAGGING YOUR COMICS, AND SPENDING AN ETERNITY SLOBBERING OVER YOUR "WANT LIST"--JUST LIKE THE PATHETIC SOULS THAT EDIT HAUNTED HORROR!
Art by
Drazen Kozjan
SPECIAL SCARIFYING
Mr. KARSWELL
ISSUE!
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HAUNTED HORROR
#14
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IDW

Editors: Steve Banes, Clizia Gussoni, and Craig Yoe. Contributing Editors: Tillman Courth, Mike Howlett, Toxic Tommy O'Brien, and Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr.

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On the cover, *Eerie* #10, December-January 1952-1953. Art: A.C. Hollingsworth.

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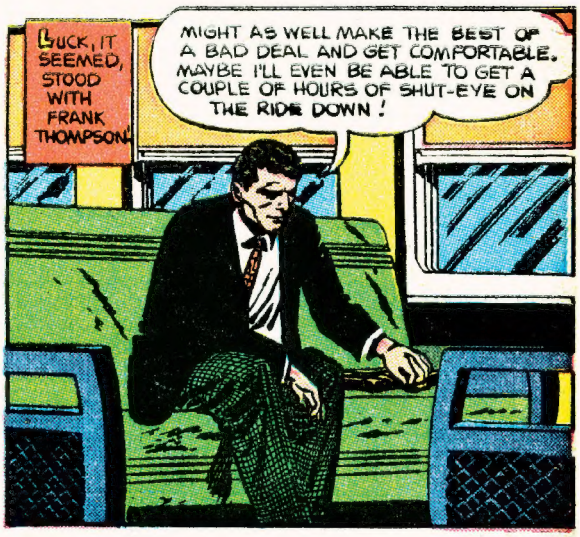
ALL ABOARD THE NIGHTMARE TRAIN, AS WE EMBARK UPON ANOTHER EERIE EXCURSION INTO TERROR! PLEASE SIT BACK AND RELAX-- YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO GO LOCO LATER! THIS ONE-WAY TICKET ON THE WRONG TRACK TO WEIRDSVILLE COULD BE YOUR FINAL DESTINATION-- --SO CONDUCT YOURSELF INAPPROPRIATELY! HEE HEE!
CITY OF FEARFUL NIGHT
I WON'T PERMIT YOU TO CREATE A DISTASTEFUL SCENE. NO ONE AVOIDS A WORK DETAIL HERE!
NO. THIS ISN'T HAPPENING TO ME! NOT TO FRANK THOMPSON. SOMEONE ELSE IS BEING TORTURED THIS WAY. THERE'S A MISTAKE. A DREADFUL MISTAKE!
THE WORLD WAS A PARADOX THAT NIGHT....WHEN LIFE BECAME DEATH AND REASON BECAME INSANITY AND LATE BECAME EARLY! LIFE BECAME DEATH ON THE LUSH, FULL LIPS OF A BEAUTIFUL GIRL...AND REASON BECAME INSANITY IN THE KNIFE BLADE STUCK BETWEEN A MAN'S SHOULDER BLADES....AND LATE BECAME EARLY WHEN THE TARDY FRANK THOMPSON ARRIVED TOO SOON IN THE..." CITY OF FEARFUL NIGHT."

Art by Art Fuentes.
Mr. Karswell's blog with his posts of pre-code horror comics is at: TheHorrorsOfItAll.Blogspot.com

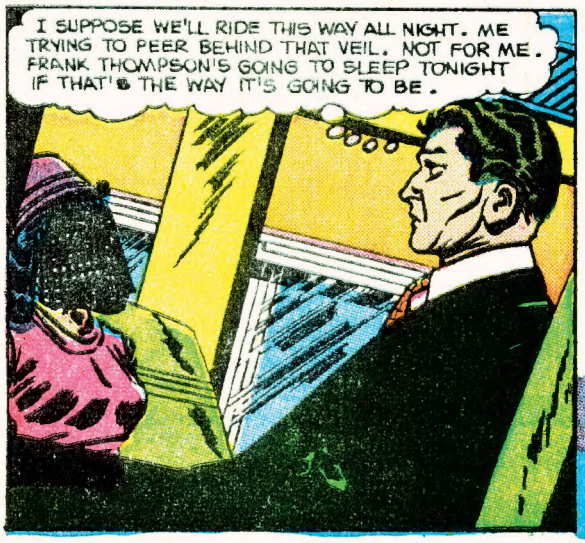
Worlds of Fear #2, January 1952. Art: Bernard Baily. Publisher: Fawcett.

IT BEGAN IN SMALL WAYS AS THESE THINGS ALWAYS DO. A WATCH STOPS TICKING. A MAN OVERSLEEPS. THE CAB DRIVER TAKES THE WRONG TURN. TRAFFIC IS HEAVY. AND THAT ONE NIGHT, THE PLANE LEFT SECONDS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

PASSAGE BOOKED, EVERYTHING TAKEN CARE OF! AND THERE SHE GOES WITH MY BAGS ABOARD. WELL, I STILL HAVE A CHANCE OF KEEPING MY APPOINTMENT! IT'LL DEPEND ON TRAIN SCHEDULES AND LUCK!


LUCK, IT SEEMED, STOOD WITH FRANK THOMPSON.
MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE BEST OF A BAD DEAL AND GET COMFORTABLE. MAYBE I'LL EVEN BE ABLE TO GET A COUPLE OF HOURS OF SHUT-EYE ON THE RIDE DOWN!

I ALWAYS TRY TO MAKE FRIENDS ON LONG RIDES. HELPS THE TIME PASS. SAY, MAY I GET YOU A MAGAZINE OR SOMETHING? ON SECOND THOUGHT, MAYBE I'M INTRUDING. I BEE YOU WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE.


I SUPPOSE WE'LL RIDE THIS WAY ALL NIGHT. ME TRYING TO PEER BEHIND THAT VEIL. NOT FOR ME. FRANK THOMPSON'S GOING TO SLEEP TONIGHT IF THAT'S THE WAY IT'S GOING TO BE.

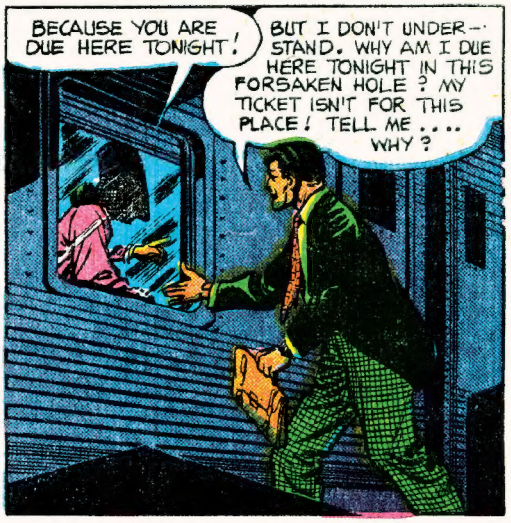
NIGHT FELL AND FRANK SURRENDERED HIS MIND TO THE OPIATE OF SLEEP. SUDDENLY, AFTER MANY HOURS HE WAS TORN FROM SLUMBER, HIS TONGUE THICK IN HIS HEAD, HIS EYELIDS HEAVY, HIS MIND NUMBED.

PLEASE. BEFORE THE TRAIN PULLS OUT AND YOU'RE STILL ON IT.
YEAH..YEAH, JUST WANNA GET MY BRIEFCASE. DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU. EVER SO NICE.

THOMPSON HURRIED UP THE AISLE AND THEN DOWN THE CAR STEPS TO THE PLATFORM. THE COLD NIGHT AIR HIT HIM, AND HIS MIND BEGAN TO CLEAR!
WHAT AM I DOING HERE? WHY DID I GET OFF THE TRAIN?

YOU! YOU IN THERE! GIRL! TURN AROUND! FACE ME! I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME! YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS CRAZY STUNT! WHY DID YOU SEND ME OUT ON THE STATION PLATFORM? THIS IS THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE!
WHY? WHY?
RAP! RAP! RAP!

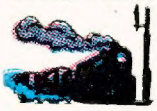
A COLD CHILL RAN THROUGH THOMPSON. HE COULD NOT HELP SHIVERING. WAS THIS GIRL LEADING HIM INTO SOME KIND OF TRAP? HE COULD NOT TEAR HIS EYES FROM HER FACE ALTHOUGH EVERY NERVE IN HIS BODY BEGGED THAT HE LOOK BEHIND HIM!

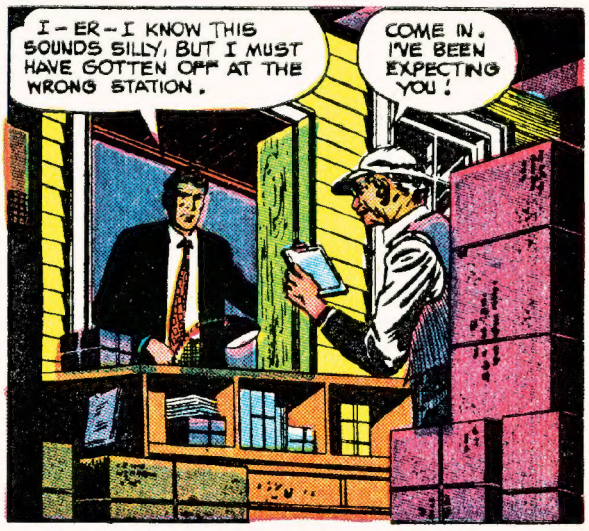

BECAUSE YOU ARE DUE HERE TONIGHT!
BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHY AM I DUE HERE TONIGHT IN THIS FORSAKEN HOLE? MY TICKET ISN'T FOR THIS PLACE! TELL ME.... WHY?

THOMPSON STAGGERED BACK AS IF HE'D RECEIVED A BLOW IN THE FACE. STUNNED, HE WATCHED THE TRAIN PICK UP SPEED AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE NIGHT.

A THING DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN LIKE THIS. SOMEWHERE IN THE PAST I MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING EVIL, SO LONG AGO I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS! AND I MUST BE PAYING FOR IT THIS NIGHT.

IT WAS A LONELY, FRIGHTENED FRANK THOMPSON WHO TURNED AROUND TO INSPECT THE DEPOT AND THE TOWN BEYOND IT. ONLY ONE SPOT OF LIGHT AND WARMTH BECKONED, AND THAT WAS FROM THE STATION-MASTER'S SMALL HOUSE!



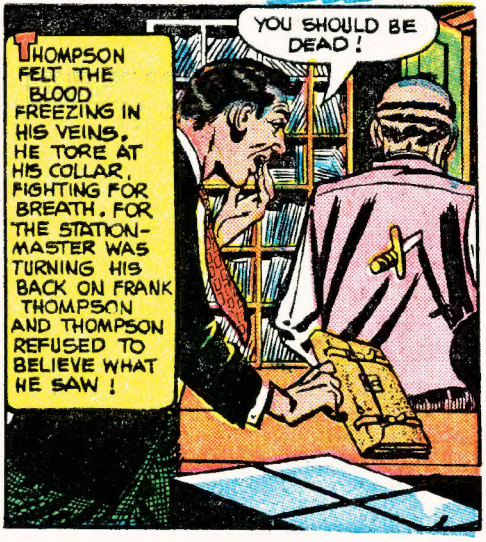


EXPECTING ME?
YOU'LL BE HERE A LONG TIME. YOUR BEST BET WOULD BE TO GO INTO TOWN AND CHECK IN AT OUR TAVERN HOTEL. ON THE MORROW YOU'LL BE ASSIGNED PERMANENT LODGINGS.

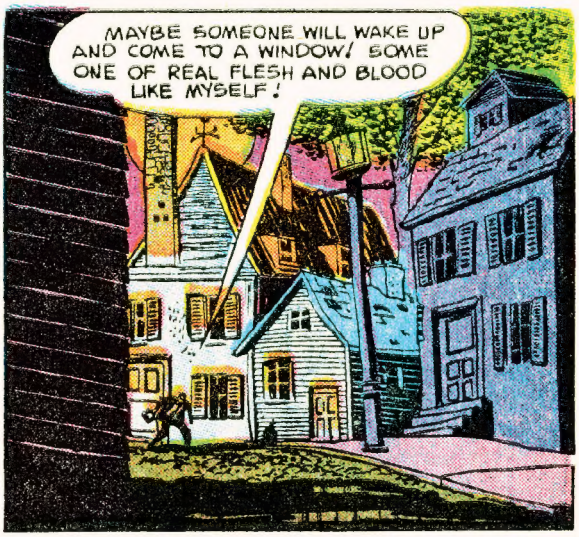
THOMPSON FELT LIKE A MAN IN A NIGHTMARE WHO KEEPS RUNNING, BUT WHOSE FEET NEVER TAKE HIM ANYWHERE.

HE TRIED TO SHRUG OFF THE STATION-MASTER'S ADVICE.

I DON'T WANT LODGING. I WANT TO KNOW WHEN THE NEXT TRAIN GOES OUT OF HERE!
THERE ARE NO TRAINS GOING OUT OF THIS TOWN. ALL WHO COME HERE COME TO STAY! THERE ARE ONLY INCOMING TRAINS!

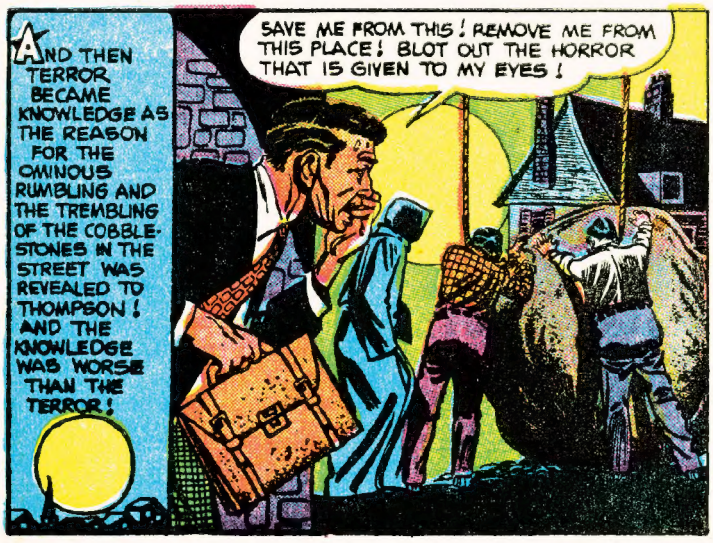

YOU SHOULD BE DEAD!
THOMPSON FELT THE BLOOD FREEZING IN HIS VEINS. HE TORE AT HIS COLLAR, FIGHTING FOR BREATH. FOR THE STATION-MASTER WAS TURNING HIS BACK ON FRANK THOMPSON AND THOMPSON REFUSED TO BELIEVE WHAT HE SAW!

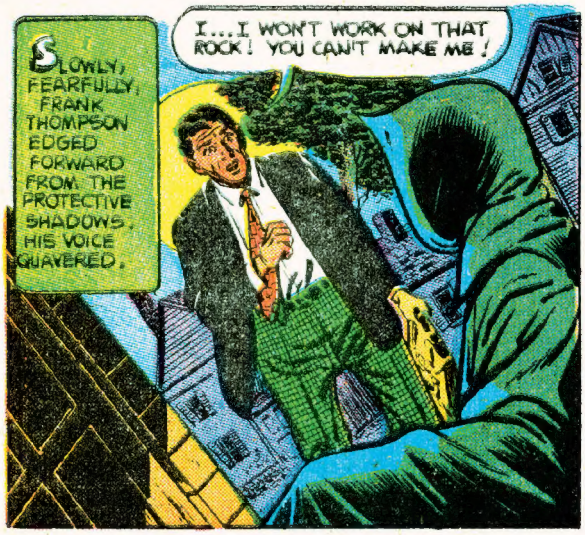
THE NIGHT WAS ONE WITH TERROR AS FRANK THOMPSON FLED. THE SOUND OF HIS SHOES ON THE STATION PLATFORM ECHOED HOLLOWLY, BEATING OUT A FRANTIC DESPERATE WARNING THAT THERE WAS NO ESCAPE!



THOMPSON'S BODY NO LONGER COULD OBEY THE TERROR IN HIS MIND AND HE STAGGERED TO A HALT.
I--I CAN'T RUN ANY FARTHER! MY CHEST....ACHES WITH PAIN!

SOMETHING IS COMING AFTER ME.... COMING TO GET ME! AND I'M FROZEN HERE TO THIS SPOT! I CAN'T MOVE! I CAN'T.... IT'S NO USE ANY LONGER!
RUMBLE CRASH!


AND THEN TERROR BECAME KNOWLEDGE AS THE REASON FOR THE OMINOUS RUMBLING AND THE TREMBLING OF THE COBBLESTONES IN THE STREET WAS REVEALED TO THOMPSON! AND THE KNOWLEDGE WAS WORSE THAN THE TERROR!
SAVE ME FROM THIS! REMOVE ME FROM THIS PLACE! BLOT OUT THE HORROR THAT IS GIVEN TO MY EYES!


SLOWLY, FEARFULLY, FRANK THOMPSON EDGED FORWARD FROM THE PROTECTIVE SHADOWS. HIS VOICE QUAVERED.
I...I WON'T WORK ON THAT ROCK! YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!

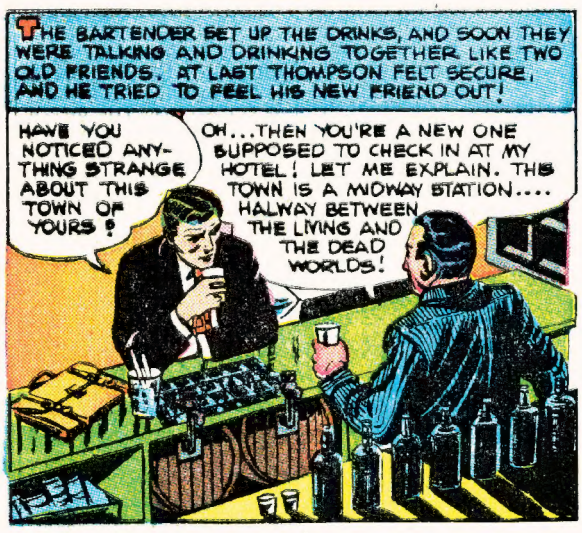
AND THEN THOMPSON RAISED HIS EYES AND LOOKED AT THE HEAD OF THIS MAN WHOSE FINGERS WERE FLESHLESS. HE COULD NO LONGER DENY THE EVIDENCE OF HIS SENSES!
YOU ARE NOT GOING TO SET A BAD EXAMPLE TO THESE MEN! YOU WILL SUFFER AND SUFFER DEARLY FOR YOUR ACTIONS THIS NIGHT.
NO!

FRANK THOMPSON TOOK TO HIS HEELS, RUNNING BLINDLY DOWN THE STREET, GOING HE KNEW NOT WHERE; SUMMONING SOME LAST SHREDS OF COURAGE--KNOWING ONLY THAT HE MUST FLEE HIS FATE!

THOMPSON STAGGERED UP THE HARD GRANITE STEPS TO THE DOOR OF THE TAVERN AND THREW THE DOOR OPEN. WITH A GASP OF RELIEF, HE LOOKED INTO A WARM, WELL-LIT ROOM.

NOTHING STRANGE ABOUT THIS MAN! NO KNIVES, NO HANGMAN'S NOOSES, OR EVEN BULLET HOLES!
GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF THEM! AREN'T MANY WITH THE NERVE TO BE RUNNING AROUND LOOSE WHEN HE SHOULD BE WORKING!

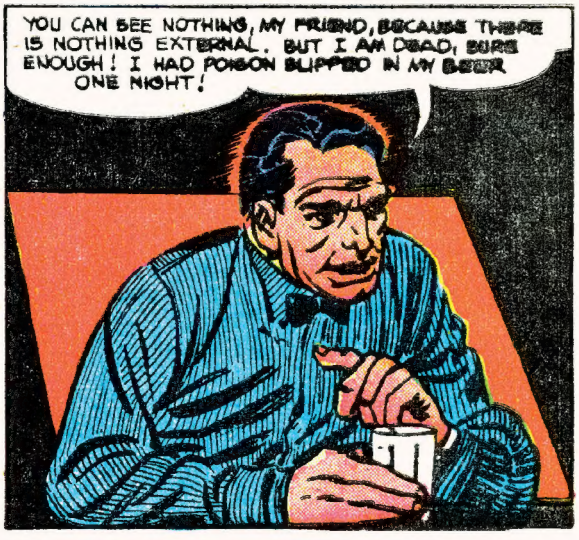
THE BARTENDER SET UP THE DRINKS, AND SOON THEY WERE TALKING AND DRINKING TOGETHER LIKE TWO OLD FRIENDS. AT LAST THOMPSON FELT SECURE, AND HE TRIED TO FEEL HIS NEW FRIEND OUT!


HAVE YOU NOTICED ANYTHING STRANGE ABOUT THIS TOWN OF YOURS?
OH...THEN YOU'RE A NEW ONE SUPPOSED TO CHECK IN AT MY HOTEL! LET ME EXPLAIN. THIS TOWN IS A MIDWAY STATION.... HALWAY BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD WORLDS!

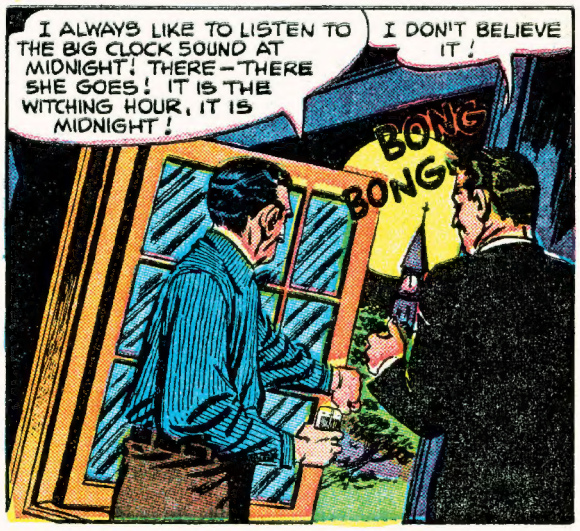
PEOPLE WHO DIE BEFORE THEIR TIME, BY MURDER, ACCIDENT OR OTHERWISE, HAVE TO SPEND THE TIME THEY WOULD NORMALLY HAVE LIVED OUT ON EARTH IN THIS MIDWAY TOWN UNTIL THE NEXT WORLD, THE SPIRIT WORLD OF THE DEAD, IS READY TO TAKE THEM.

IT WAS ALL UNBELIEVABLE TO THOMPSON. FRANK KNEW HE WAS ALIVE. HE COULD FEEL THE RUB OF HIS CLOTHING AGAINST HIS SKIN. EVEN HIS SHIRT COLLAR WAS TOO TIGHT.

MAYBE THE BARTENDER WAS PULLING HIS LEG, HAVING A LITTLE JOKE WITH HIM!


YOU CAN SEE NOTHING, MY FRIEND, BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING EXTERNAL. BUT I AM DEAD, SURE ENOUGH! I HAD POISON SLIPPED IN MY BEER ONE NIGHT!

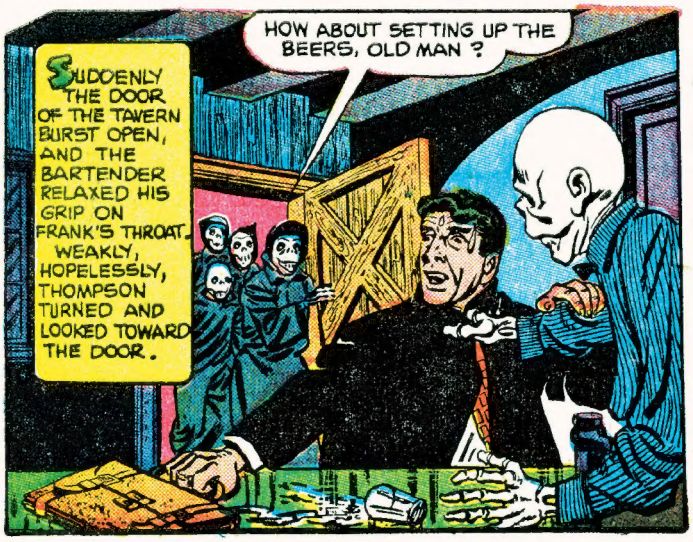
AND THAT ISN'T THE HALF OF IT! FROM NOON UNTIL MIDNIGHT WE TRAPPED SOULS ASSUME OUR LIVING APPEARANCE! FROM MIDNIGHT UNTIL NOON, WE ARE SKELETON SPIRITS!


I ALWAYS LIKE TO LISTEN TO THE BIG CLOCK SOUND AT MIDNIGHT! THERE—THERE SHE GOES! IT IS THE WITCHING HOUR, IT IS MIDNIGHT!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
BONG
BONG

THOMPSON HELD HIS BREATH. HIS EYES WERE GLUED ON THE BARTENDER WHO STOOD AT THE OPEN WINDOW, A GLASS OF BEER IN HAND, AND TOASTED THE MIDNIGHT HOUR. THE FLESH MELTED FROM THE BARTENDER'S BODY!

YOU ARE LYING TO ME! YOU'VE FOUND A SECRET YOU WON'T SHARE! YOU'VE DISCOVERED A MEANS OF OUTWITTING THE DEAD, WHO ARE THE MASTERS OF US HALF-LIVING, HALF-DEAD! LIAR!

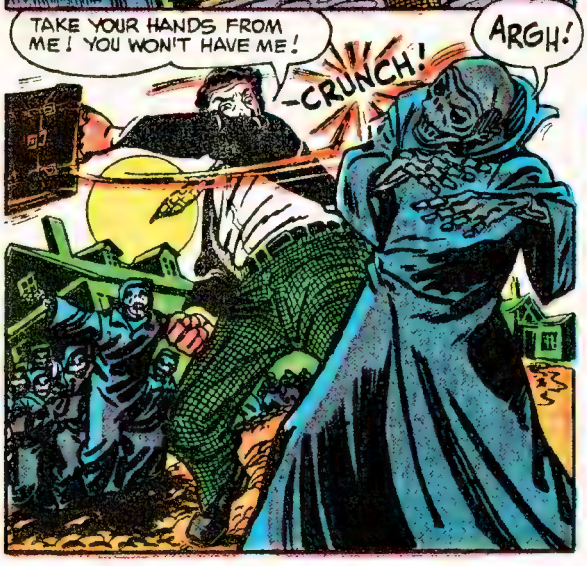
SUDDENLY THE DOOR OF THE TAVERN BURST OPEN, AND THE BARTENDER RELAXED HIS GRIP ON FRANK'S THROAT. WEAKLY, HOPELESSLY, THOMPSON TURNED AND LOOKED TOWARD THE DOOR.

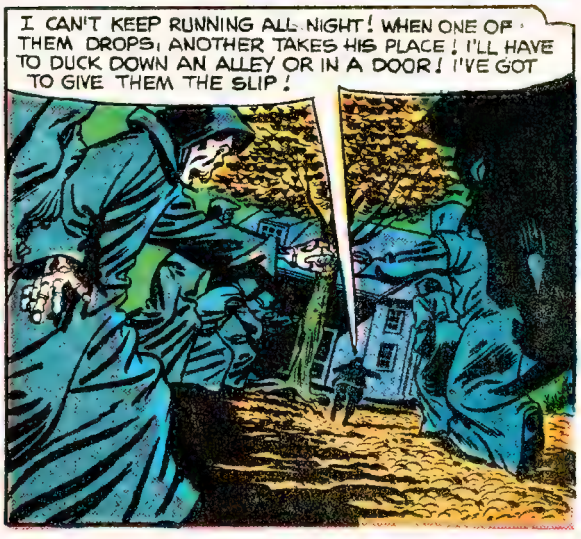


DRINK NOTHING! DO YOU SEE THIS ONE? HE'S JUST LIKE US! HE DIED BEFORE HIS TIME! BUT HE'S LICKED OUR DEAD MASTERS! AND HE WON'T TELL ME HIS SECRET! THE SELFISH RAT IS KEEPING IT TO HIMSELF!

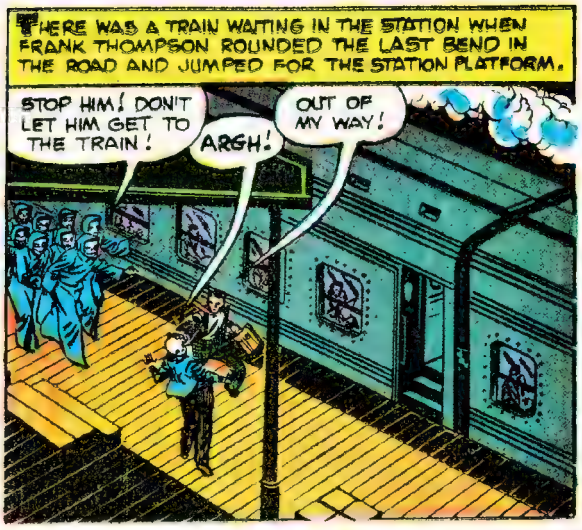
AS THE BARTENDER INCITED THE THRONG OF LOST SOULS, THEY BECAME ENRAGED, HATE EATING AT THEM WHEN THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT FRANK THOMPSON MIGHT POSSESS THE KEY TO THEIR RELEASE.

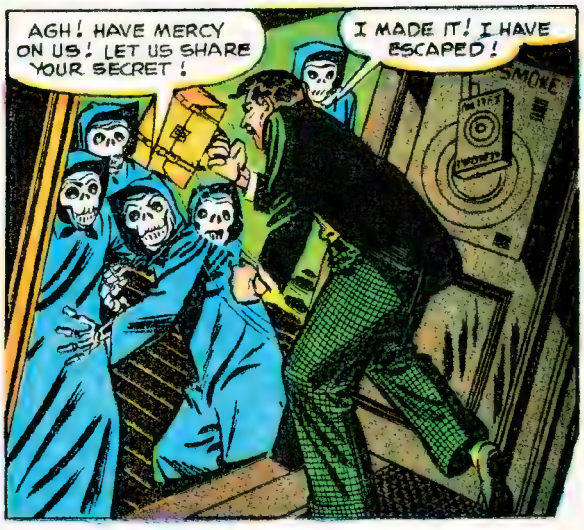
THE MOB HOWLED, FOR THE CHASE WAS TO THEIR TASTE. FOR ONCE, IN THIS MIDWAY TOWN OF LOST SOULS, THE BEATEN WERE THE MASTERS, AND THEY WERE HOUNDING THEIR PREY WITH RELISH.

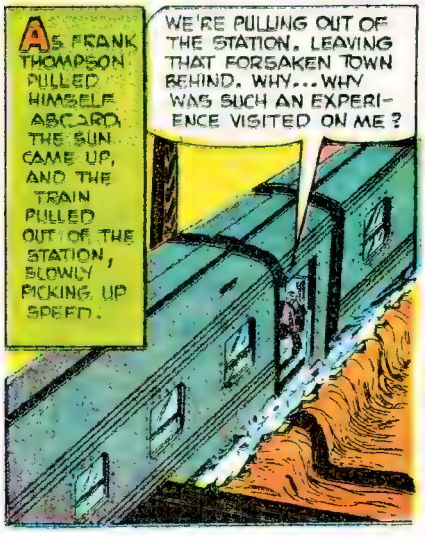



I CAN'T KEEP RUNNING ALL NIGHT! WHEN ONE OF THEM DROPS, ANOTHER TAKES HIS PLACE! I'LL HAVE TO DUCK DOWN AN ALLEY OR IN A DOOR! I'VE GOT TO GIVE THEM THE SLIP!

THE DEADLY GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK CONTINUED UNTIL JUST BEFORE DAWN. FRANK THOMPSON WAS EXHAUSTED. THE STRENGTH WAS DRAINED FROM HIS BODY. BUT HE SUMMONED HIS NERVE FOR ONE LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT AT ESCAPE!


THERE WAS A TRAIN WAITING IN THE STATION WHEN FRANK THOMPSON ROUNDED THE LAST BEND IN THE ROAD AND JUMPED FOR THE STATION PLATFORM.
STOP HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET TO THE TRAIN!
ARGH!
OUT OF MY WAY!

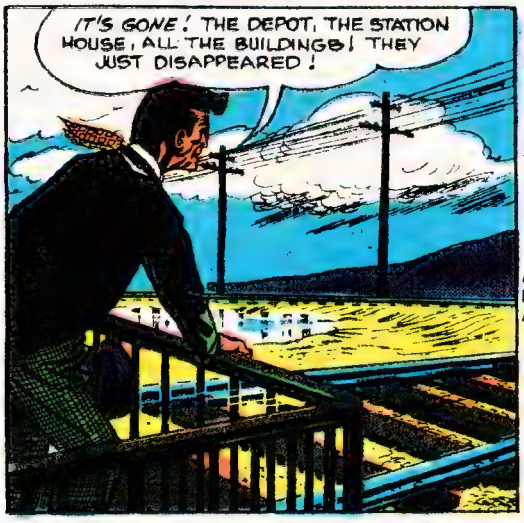



AS FRANK THOMPSON PULLED HIMSELF ABOARD, THE SUN CAME UP, AND THE TRAIN PULLED OUT OF THE STATION, SLOWLY PICKING UP SPEED.
WE'RE PULLING OUT OF THE STATION, LEAVING THAT FORSAKEN TOWN BEHIND. WHY... WHY WAS SUCH AN EXPERIENCE VISITED ON ME?

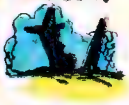
FRANK THOMPSON WALKED THE LENGTH OF THE TRAIN UNTIL HE EMERGED ON THE PLATFORM OF THE LAST CAR.

IT WAS AS IF SOMETHING DRAGGED HIM THERE FOR ONE LAST BACKWARD LOOK.

MUST BE THE EARLY MORNING AIR, SIR ! WE HAVEN'T PASSED THROUGH A TOWN ON THIS ROAD FOR THE LAST THREE HOURS !
NO TOWN THE LAST THREE HOURS ?

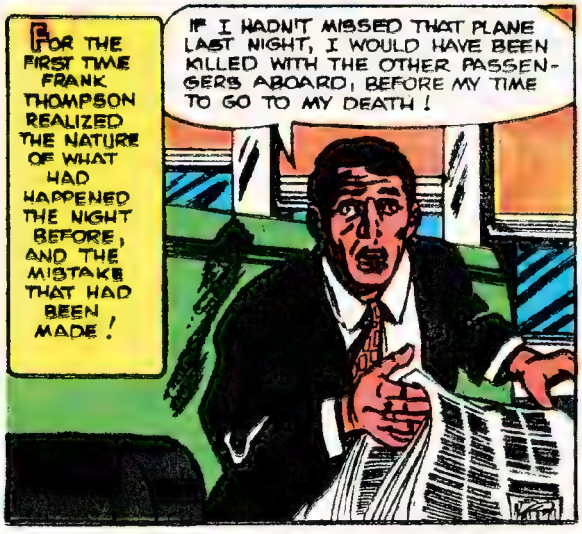


SHAKEN BY HIS EXPERIENCE, THOMPSON ENTERED THE COACH CAR AND SLUMPED INTO A SEAT. IDLY HE PICKED UP A MORNING NEWSPAPER AND GLANCED AT THE HEADLINE. HE FELT HIS HANDS TREMBLE!

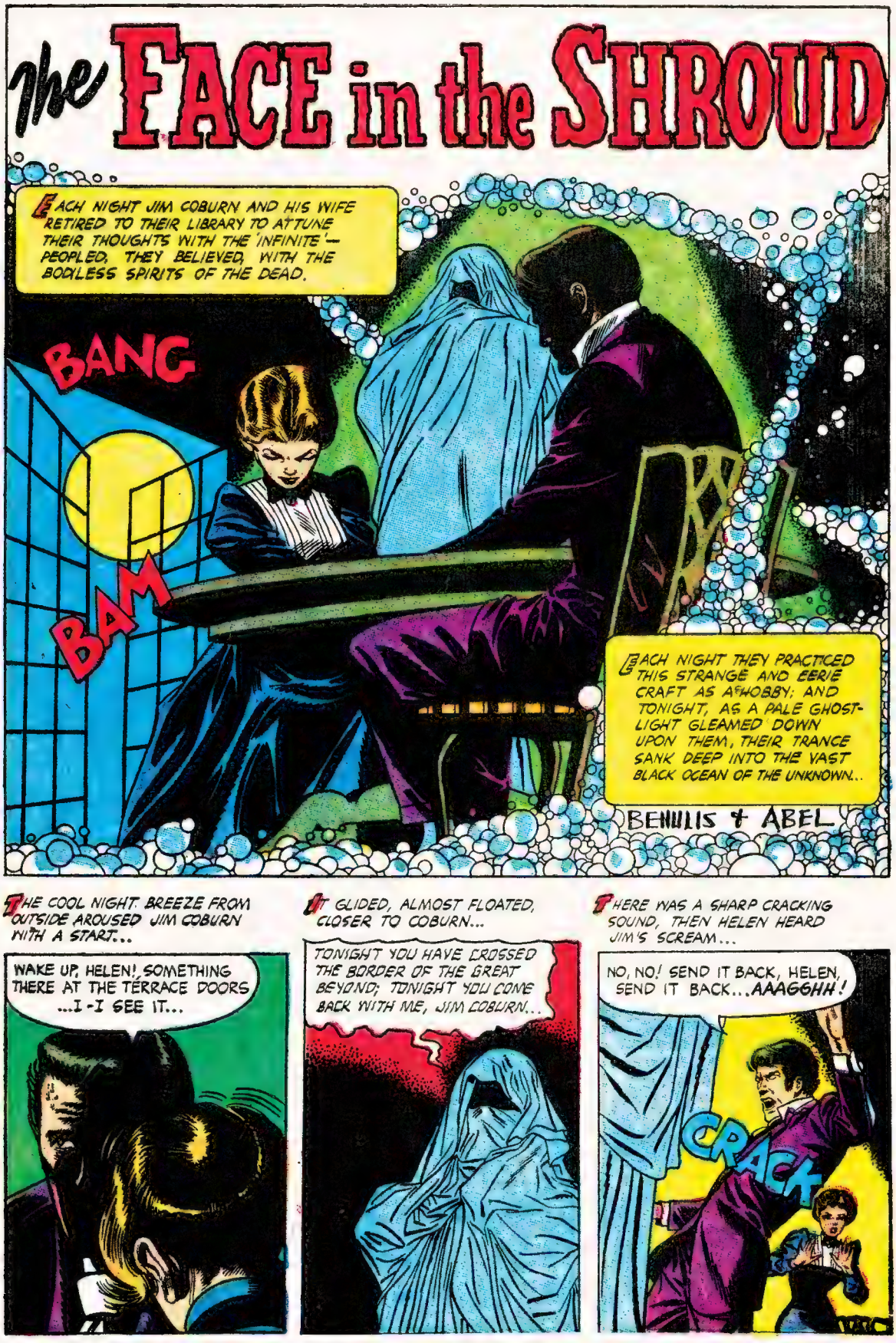


IT'S THE PLANE I MISSED LAST NIGHT ! CRASHED ! ALL ABOARD.... KILLED ! AND MY NAME IS ON THE LIST OF THOSE PRESUMED TO BE KILLED !
DAILY VIEWS
PLANE CRASH KILLS

FOR THE FIRST TIME FRANK THOMPSON REALIZED THE NATURE OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED THE NIGHT BEFORE, AND THE MISTAKE THAT HAD BEEN MADE !


IF I HADN'T MISSED THAT PLANE LAST NIGHT, I WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED WITH THE OTHER PASSENGERS ABOARD, BEFORE MY TIME TO GO TO MY DEATH !

SOMEWHERE A MISTAKE HAD BEEN MADE, AND THAT MIDWAY STATION, THE TOWN HALFWAY BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD WORLDS---TRIED TO CLAIM ME FOR ITS OWN !


the FACE in the SHROUD
EACH NIGHT JIM COBURN AND HIS WIFE RETIRED TO THEIR LIBRARY TO ATTUNE THEIR THOUGHTS WITH THE 'INFINITE'— PEOPLED, THEY BELIEVED, WITH THE BODILESS SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.
BANG
BAM
EACH NIGHT THEY PRACTICED THIS STRANGE AND EERIE CRAFT AS A HOBBY; AND TONIGHT, AS A PALE GHOST-LIGHT GLEAMED DOWN UPON THEM, THEIR TRANCE SANK DEEP INTO THE VAST BLACK OCEAN OF THE UNKNOWN...
BENULIS & ABEL
THE COOL NIGHT BREEZE FROM OUTSIDE AROUSED JIM COBURN WITH A START...
WAKE UP, HELEN! SOMETHING THERE AT THE TERRACE DOORS ...I-I SEE IT...
IT GLIDED, ALMOST FLOATED, CLOSER TO COBURN...
TONIGHT YOU HAVE CROSSED THE BORDER OF THE GREAT BEYOND; TONIGHT YOU COME BACK WITH ME, JIM COBURN...
THERE WAS A SHARP CRACKING SOUND, THEN HELEN HEARD JIM'S SCREAM...
NO, NO! SEND IT BACK, HELEN, SEND IT BACK...AAAGGHH!
CRACK

Weird Terror #11, May 1954. Art: Don Heck. Publisher: Comic Media.

IT WAS MORNING WHEN SHE FOUND HER HUSBAND, JIM, DEAD ON THE LIBRARY FLOOR. LATER, THE OLD MANSION WAS ALIVE WITH POLICE-MEN...

AND LIEUTENANT-DETECTIVE DOGAN QUIZZED HER RELENTLESSLY...

ASIDE FROM THIS GHOST POPPYCOCK, MRS. COBURN--YOUR HUSBAND WAS KILLED WITH HIS OWN GUN. YOU DO IT?

I...I WAS IN A TRANCE, I TELL YOU...

THE LAST THING I CAN RECALL WAS JIM'S VOICE, SCREAMING FOR ME TO SEND IT BACK...THAT'S ALL I KNOW, LIEUTENANT--BELIEVE ME!

THREE DAYS LATER, A MATRON RELEASED HER FROM HER CELL...

TH-THEY'RE LETTING ME GO?

YEAH, ON A FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLAR BAIL, DEARIE!

THEN, SHE WAS BEING HELPED INTO A CAB BY HER LATE HUSBAND'S PARTNER, BOB HIGGINS...

BUT FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS, BOB...H-HOW DID YOU RAISE IT? THE BUSINESS IS BAD, AND...

STOP WORRYING, HELEN... A FEW LOANS, A MORTGAGE...AND NOW THAT YOU'RE OUT, YOU'LL NEED A GOOD LAWYER.

A LAWYER--YES, SHE WOULD NEED ONE BADLY. RIGHT NOW THE D.A.'s CASE WAS PILING UP AGAINST HER...

BUT HOW SHALL I EVER REPAY YOU? JIM LEFT ME NOTHING ASIDE FROM HIS INTEREST IN THE BUSINESS, AND...

LOOK, YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THINKING ABOUT MONEY AND ABOUT GHOSTS! YOU NEED A SOLID DEFENSE IN COURT!

YOUR LIFE'S AT STAKE, HELEN! BUT, IF YOUR PRIDE'S SHOWING ABOUT REPAYING ME, JIM'S SHARE OF THE BUSINESS WILL TAKE CARE OF A SMALL PART OF IT! YOU CAN SIGN IT OVER TO ME...

ARRIVING AT THE OLD MANSION THAT EVENING, HELEN WAVED GOODBYE...

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING, BOB--ABOUT SIGNING, I-I'LL HAVE TO THINK IT OVER!

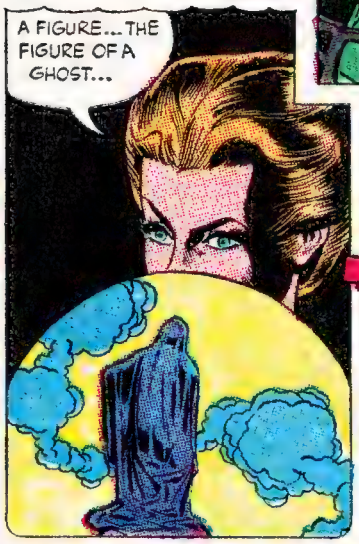
GOOD ENOUGH! I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW MORNING AND IF YOU'VE REACHED A DECISION, WE'LL MEET IN THE OFFICE!

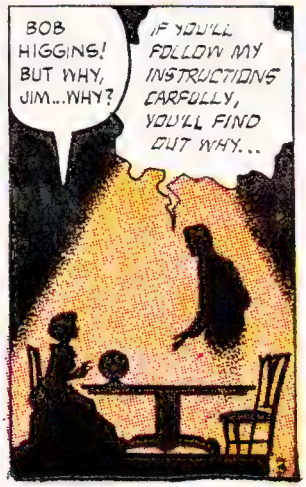
SHE GAVE A LOT OF THOUGHT TO ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED. AND THAT SAME NIGHT, SHE WENT TO THE STUDY. ONCE AGAIN, THE GHOSTLY GLOBE SHONE, AND HELEN COBURN SAT VERY STILL AND QUIET...

SHE WAS DEEP IN A TRANCE, REACHING FOR THAT DARK WORLD BEYOND MAN'S KNOWLEDGE...

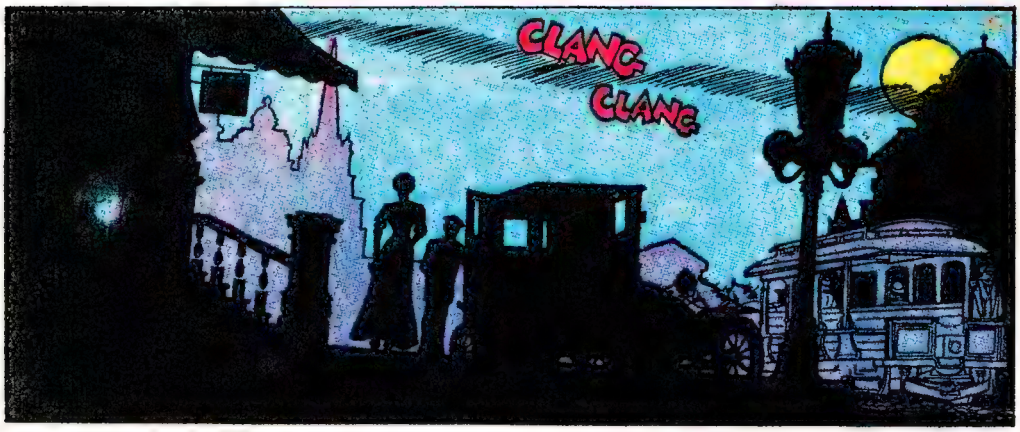
THEN, SUDDENLY, SHE COULD FEEL THE PRESENCE OF SOMETHING CLOSE IN THE OLD LIBRARY WITH HER.

HYPNOTICALLY HER EYES OPENED AND SHE STARED AT THE FADING CLOUDINESS IN THE CRYSTAL BALL...





IT WAS WELL AFTER MIDNIGHT WHEN SHE REACHED HER HUSBAND'S OFFICE...



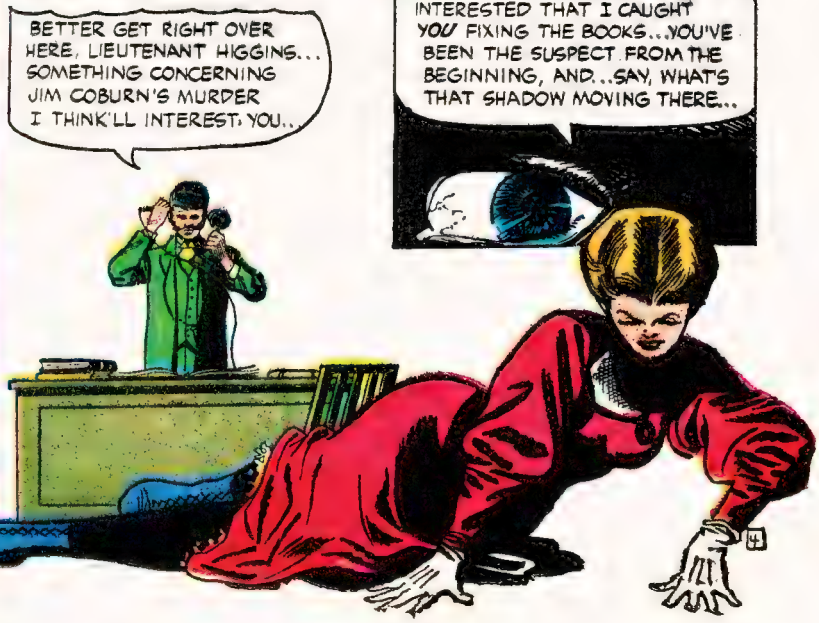
SHE USED THE STAIRS TO THE NINTH FLOOR, COBURN'S KEY LET HER INTO THE OUTER OFFICE...

HIGGINS HAD HEARD THE SOFT FOOTSTEP BEHIND HIM...BUT WHEN HE TURNED, A ROUND BLACK HOLE POINTED HIS WAY...

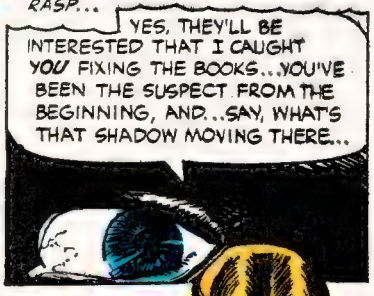
HE COULD SENSE THE HOT EXCITEMENT IN HER VOICE...

HIS ARM SHOT OUT, AND SENT HER REELING BACK SUDDENLY...

IT WAS ALL HAPPENING TOO QUICKLY, FOR HER TO MAKE SENSE OF IT...

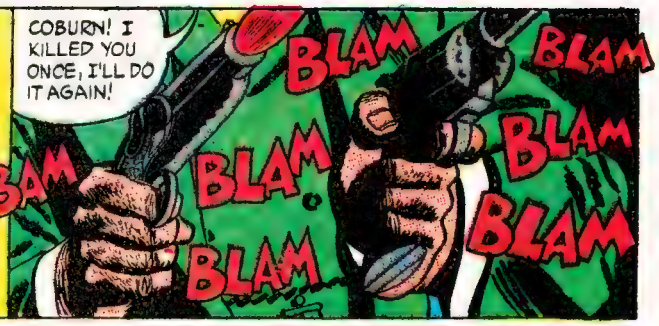


HIS VOICE WAS A HARSH GLOATING RASP...

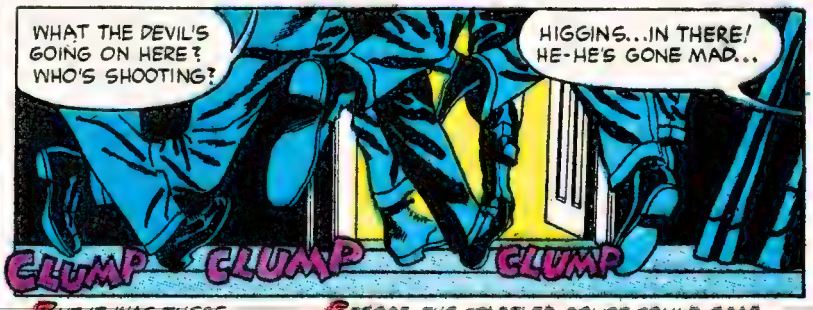

YES, THEY'LL BE INTERESTED THAT I CAUGHT YOU FIXING THE BOOKS...YOU'VE BEEN THE SUSPECT FROM THE BEGINNING, AND...SAY, WHAT'S THAT SHADOW MOVING THERE...

IT WAS A SHADOW OF LIGHT AND DARK; A SHADOW OF WRATH, THAT SPOKE LIKE A COOL BREEZE BLOWING

AGAIN AND AGAIN THE GUNS IN HIGGINS' HANDS BLAZED AT THE CLOUDY SHAPE...



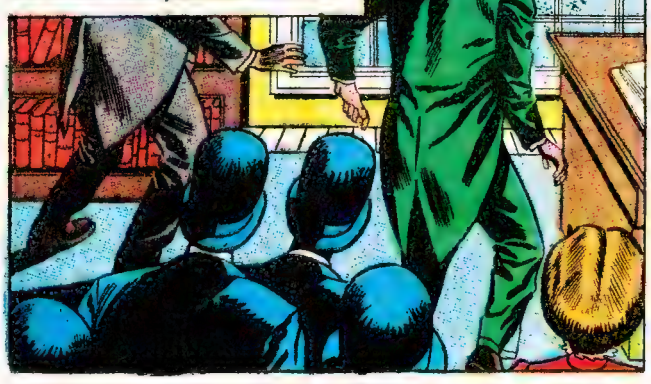
THE POUNDING OF FOOTSTEPS, THEN; DETECTIVE DOGAN'S VOICE RINGING LOUDLY...

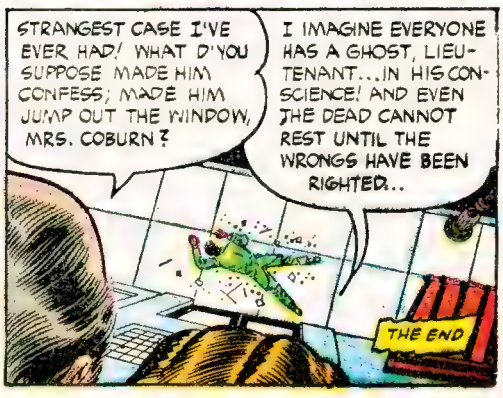


BUT IT WAS THERE, PEERING IN AT HIM THROUGH THE WINDOW; IT WAS LAUGHING WITH A HIGH WHISTLING SOUND...

BEFORE THE STARTLED POLICE COULD GRAB HIM, HIGGINS HURLED HIMSELF AT THE WINDOW...

NOW THE BLABBERING VOICE OF HIGGINS...




STRANGEST CASE I'VE EVER HAD! WHAT D'YOU SUPPOSE MADE HIM CONFESS; MADE HIM JUMP OUT THE WINDOW, MRS. COBURN?
I IMAGINE EVERYONE HAS A GHOST, LIEUTENANT...IN HIS CONSCIENCE! AND EVEN THE DEAD CANNOT REST UNTIL THE WRONGS HAVE BEEN RIGHTED..
THE END

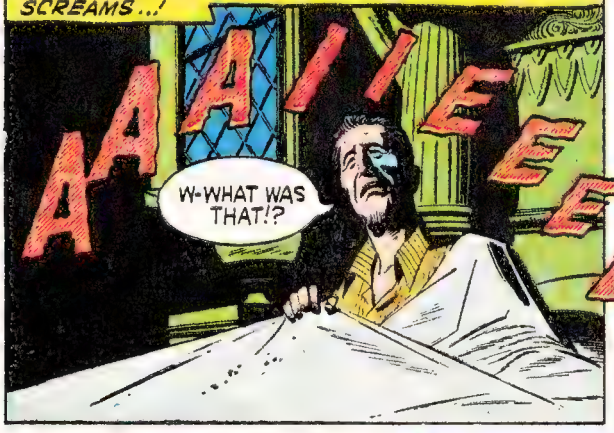
THE SCREAMING SKULLS

MYLES WILLITSON, AN EVIL, SCHEMING MAN, HAD LONG COVETED CALGARTH, AN ANCIENT HOMESTEAD IN AMBLESIDE, ENGLAND. THE OWNERS, KRASTER AND DOROTHY BARR HAD REFUSED TO SELL TO THEIR CRAFTY NEIGHBOR, AND FINALLY WILLITSON HAD SWORN HE WOULD HAVE THE ESTATE, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER! NONE KNEW THEN AT WHAT FEARFUL COST!!

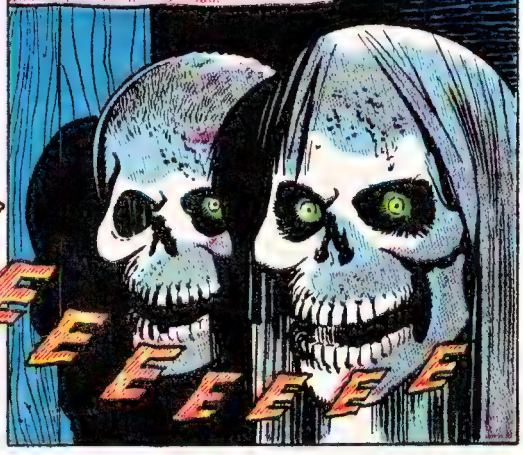
ONE NIGHT, AFTER CAREFUL PLANNING, HE HAD A LARGE SILVER CUP PLANTED IN CALGARTH, AND WHEN IT WAS "FOUND," HAD THE BARRS CONDEMNED TO DEATH FOR STEALING. BUT IN COURT, BEFORE BEING LED AWAY...

B-1734

WITH THE PLEA THAT THE BARRS HAD OWED HIM MONEY, WILLITSON TOOK THEIR PROPERTY AFTER THEIR EXECUTION, AND MOVED HIS FAMILY INTO CALGARTH. THEN, ONE NIGHT THEY WERE AWAKENED BY A SERIES OF BLOODCURDLING SCREAMS...!



WHEN AT LAST THEIR SOURCE WAS LOCATED IN THE ATTIC, A MOST GHASTLY DISCOVERY WAS MADE... TWO HIDEOUSLY GRINNING, SCREAMING SKULLS!!



FAINT WITH FEAR, WILLITSON ORDERED THE BODIES OF KRASTER AND DOROTHY BARR DISINTERRED...!

ALL ATTEMPTS TO BURY, BURN, OR BREAK THE SKULLS, FAILED! THEY WOULD APPEAR AT THE MOST UNEXPECTED TIMES, SCREAMING THEIR THROATLESS SCREAMS!

FINALLY THE STORY BECAME SO WIDELY KNOWN, AND THE WILLITSONS SO DISLIKED AND SHUNNED BY EVERYONE, THEY WERE FORCED TO SELL CALGARTH AND LEAVE...

...TO WANDER ON TOWARD AN UNKNOWN FATE... FOLLOWED EVER BY THE CURSE OF THE SCREAMING SKULLS!

The End

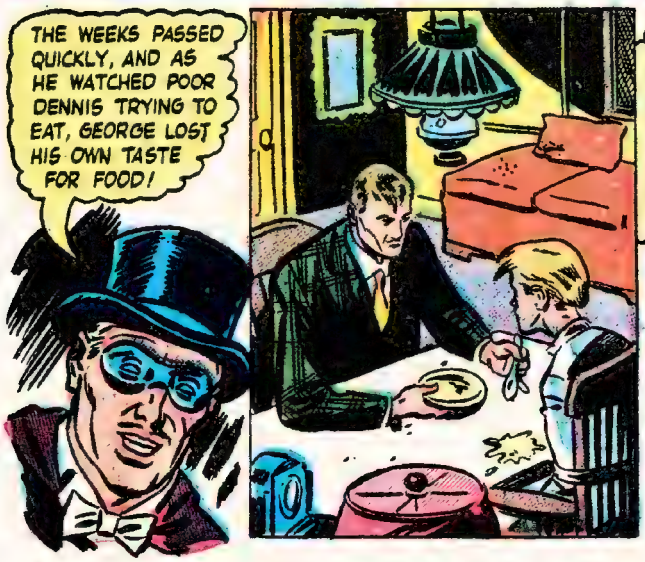
The Unseen #12, November 1953. Attributed to Gene Fawcette. Publisher: Standard.

DEATH a La Carte
HERE'S A LITTLE MORSEL THAT SHOULD SERVE TO WHET YOUR APPETITE / THE MAIN COURSE WAS MURDER ... AND THE DESSERT WAS DEATH !
OUR STORY STARTS IN THE JENSEN SANITARIUM WHERE WE FIND GEORGE PHILLIPS GETTING READY FOR HIS EVENING MEAL...
SHALL WE GET READY FOR DINNER NOW, MR. PHILLIPS ?
SHE MEANS WELL, BUT CAN'T SHE UNDERSTAND HOW I FEEL WHEN I SEE FOOD ?
HOW DO YOU FEEL TODAY ? BETTER, I HOPE ?
I FEEL TERRIBLE AND YOU KNOW IT / I'M SKIN AND BONES / I LOOK LIKE DEATH ! AND I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD RIGHT NOW !

Mister Mistery #1, September 1951. Art: Mike Esposito. Publisher: Stanley Morse.

NONSENSE! NOW THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK! I'M SURE IF YOU TRY JUST A BIT OF THIS SOUP YOU'LL FEEL MUCH BETTER!
SHUT UP! DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT FOOD! TAKE IT AWAY!
GO AWAY! AND TAKE THIS WITH YOU!
MR. PHILLIPS, PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOU! THIS REFUSING TO EAT IS NOT A PHYSICAL DEFECT, BUT A MENTAL ONE! THERE'S SOMETHING MENTALLY WRONG WITH YOU!
I TELL YOU I'M NOT CRAZY! AND YOU CAN'T HELP ME... I KNOW YOU CAN'T!
BUT I INTEND TO TRY JUST THE SAME! SO YOU'D BETTER START AT THE BEGINNING, AND I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN MAKE OF YOUR CASE!
I MIGHT AS WELL GET IT OFF MY CHEST! IF I DON'T TELL SOMEONE, I WILL GO CRAZY! IT ALL BEGAN WITH A LETTER I GOT FROM A COUSIN JUST BEFORE HE DIED...
Dear Cousin George By the time you get this letter, I'll be dead! I'm asking you to come to Redwood City to take care of my son, your cousin, Dennis and also his inheritance. Regar Cou
THAT'S HOW IT ALL STARTED! THAT'S HOW HE HAPPENED TO BE IN THAT BIG UGLY HOUSE IN REDWOOD CITY IN THE FIRST PLACE! ALL BECAUSE OF A LETTER... AND THE PROMISE OF MONEY...
HELLO! ANYONE HOME?
IN HERE!
THAT WAS HIS FIRST SIGHT OF COUSIN DENNIS... POOR IDIOTIC COUSIN DENNIS!
2

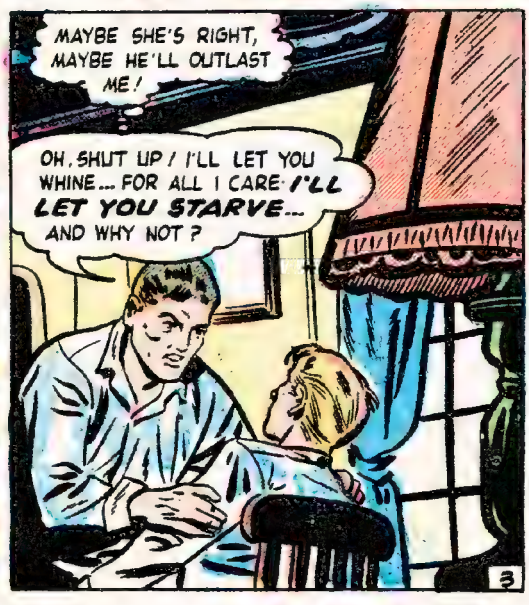
YOU MUST BE GEORGE PHILLIPS! I'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF YOUR COUSIN TILL YOU GOT HERE! AFTER YOU'VE FED HIM, TAKE OFF HIS CLOTHES AND BATHE HIM! THEN PUT HIM TO BED! OH, YES, THERE'S A BABY BUGGY IN THE PARLOR! HE LIKES TO BE TAKEN FOR A RIDE EVERY AFTERNOON!



EMOTIONALLY HE ALSO LOST EVERYTHING! HOW CAN ONE HAVE FEELINGS WHILE PUSHING A HELPLESS HULK OF THIRTEEN AROUND IN A BABY BUGGY!

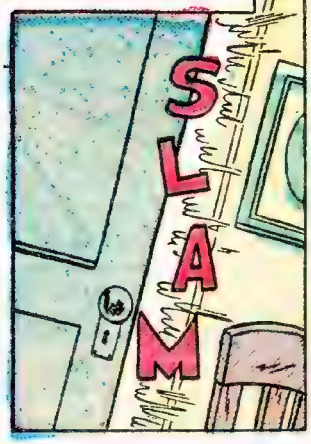
ANOTHER THING THAT KEPT GEORGE ON WAS EDNA! THE THOUGHT THAT SOME DAY DENNIS WOULD DIE AND THEN THEY WOULD HAVE HIS MONEY TO GET MARRIED ON! THAT WAS ENOUGH TO KEEP ANY MAN GOING!

YES, DARLING, HE'S STILL ALL RIGHT! BUT HE CAN'T LAST FOREVER!
OH, GEORGE, YOU KNOW WE CAN'T GET MARRIED WITHOUT THAT MONEY... AND IT LOOKS AS IF WE'LL NEVER GET MARRIED!



THE PLAN WAS SIMPLE. ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS GET LOCKED IN THE FOOD-STOCKED CELLAR. AND THAT WAS EASY, JUST FORGET TO UNSNAP THE LOCK AND THE WIND WAS SURE TO SNAP THE DOOR SHUT, THUS LOCKING IT...

BUT BEFORE GEORGE COULD COMPLETELY CHANGE HIS MIND...

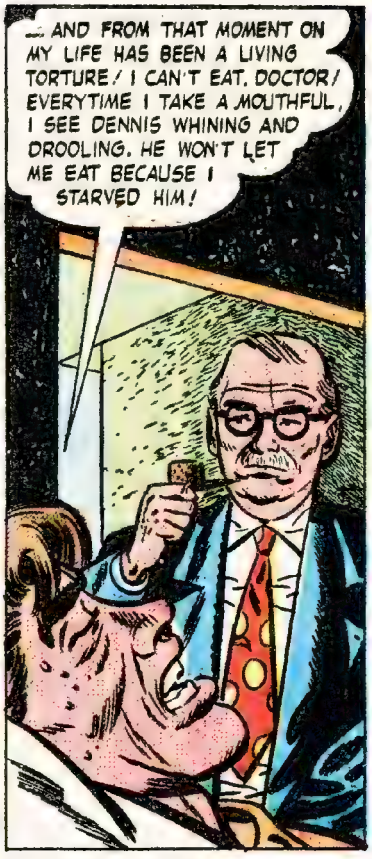


FROM THEN ON IT WAS SMOOTH SAILING. HE PLAYED THE PART OF THE GRIEF-STRICKEN COUSIN TO PERFECTION. AND A FEW DAYS LATER...

BUT I BLAME MYSELF FOR WHAT HAPPENED. DENNIS' DEATH WAS MY FAULT!
BUT YOU MUST NOT FEEL THAT WAY, MR. PHILLIPS. IS THAT ANYWAY FOR A MAN TO ACT WHO'S JUST INHERITED $100,000!

IT WAS A MATTER OF A FEW HOURS BEFORE HE WAS BACK WITH EDNA AND THEY WERE MARRIED. IT WAS ON THEIR HONEYMOON WHEN...

BUT IT WASN'T EDNA SITTING ACROSS FROM GEORGE... IT WAS COUSIN DENNIS!


... AND FROM THAT MOMENT ON MY LIFE HAS BEEN A LIVING TORTURE! I CAN'T EAT, DOCTOR! EVERYTIME I TAKE A MOUTHFUL, I SEE DENNIS WHINING AND DROOLING. HE WON'T LET ME EAT BECAUSE I STARVED HIM!

YOU MUST REALIZE THAT THIS IMAGE EXISTS ONLY IN YOUR MIND BECAUSE YOU BLAME YOURSELF FOR WHAT'S HAPPENED. BUT EVEN IF YOU DID WISH HARM ON DENNIS, IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT! THE WIND BLEW THE CELLAR DOOR SHUT AND YOU COULDN'T GET OUT!

I'M CURED, DARLING, CURED! AND TOMORROW I'LL BE LEAVING TO COME BACK TO YOU!
AND I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU! I FIXED UP COUSIN DENNIS' HOUSE, AND THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE TO MEET ME!
IN A FEW WEEKS THE CURE WAS COMPLETE...

BEFORE I SERVE YOU, THERE'S SOMETHING I FOUND THAT YOU MUST SEE. IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL THING IN THE WHOLE HOUSE!
YES, DEAR, WHAT IS IT?

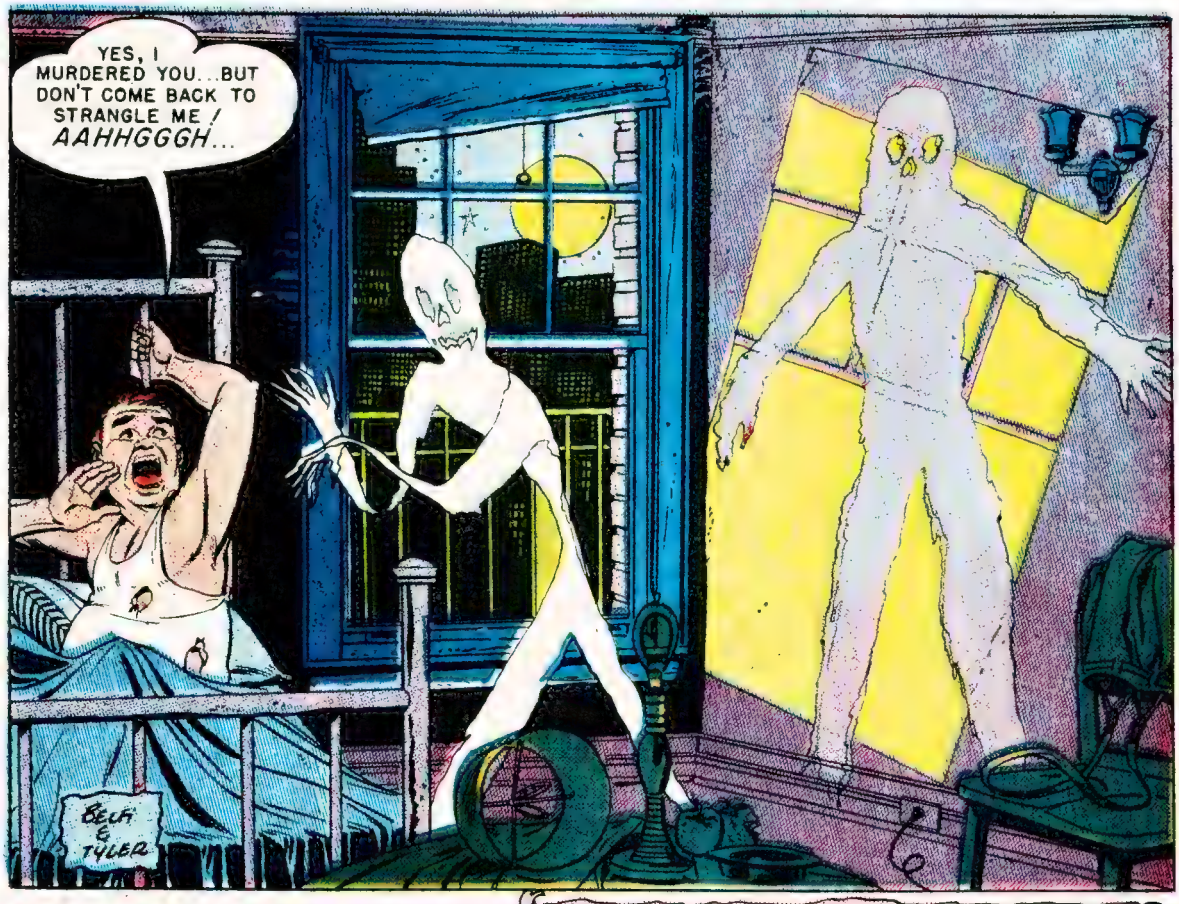
ISN'T IT DIVINE? I'VE ALWAYS WANTED A CHILD AND...
TAKE IT AWAY, EDNA. TAKE IT AWAY!

PLEASE TAKE IT AWAY, DARLING. IT BRINGS BACK SO MANY HORRIBLE MEMORIES!
I'M SORRY, GEORGE. I KNOW WHY YOU'RE SO TOUCHY... IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE HUNGRY! DINNER'S COMING RIGHT UP!
ONCE THE BUGGY WAS OUT OF SIGHT HE TRIED TO ACT LIKE A HAPPY NORMAL HUSBAND. BUT THE HOUSE WAS BEGINNING TO GET HIM...
ISN'T IT LOVELY, DARLING?
THAT WAS DENNIS' FORK! I REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS BENT! UUGGHH!
NO WONDER YOU'RE NOT EATING. THERE'S NO RELISH! YOU NEVER EAT WITHOUT RELISH! I'LL RUN RIGHT DOWN TO THE CELLAR AND GET SOME!
GEORGE! WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S THE MATTER!
SLAM!
DENNIS! HE'S COME BACK TO HAUNT ME! TAKE HIM AWAY!
OPEN THE DOOR! LET ME OUT! OH, GEORGE!
STOP PLAYING GAMES, GEORGE... LET ME OUT!
6

WONDER HOW THE HONEYMOONERS ARE DOING? HAVEN'T SEEN EITHER OF THEM FOR 5 DAYS NOW. BETTER DROP IN AND SEE IF EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT!
HEL-LO! ANYONE HOME? WHAT'S THAT NOISE FROM BEHIND THAT DOOR?
JUST A SECOND, AND I'LL HAVE YOU OUT OF THERE! FUNNY HOW THE BABY CARRIAGE MANAGED TO LOCK THE DOOR!
WHY DIDN'T HE ANSWER! WHY DIDN'T HE LET ME OUT?
MAYBE SOMETHING'S WRONG! WE'D BETTER GO SEE!
GEORGE! GEORGE! OH! NO!
HAVEN'T LOST YOUR APPETITE OVER THAT ONE, HAVE YOU? THIS IS NO TIME TO START GETTING FUSSY... I'M JUST ABOUT READY TO SERVE YOU YOUR DESSERT! IT'S A LITTLE SNACK I'M SURE YOU'LL REALLY RELISH! HEH... HEH... HEH!
7

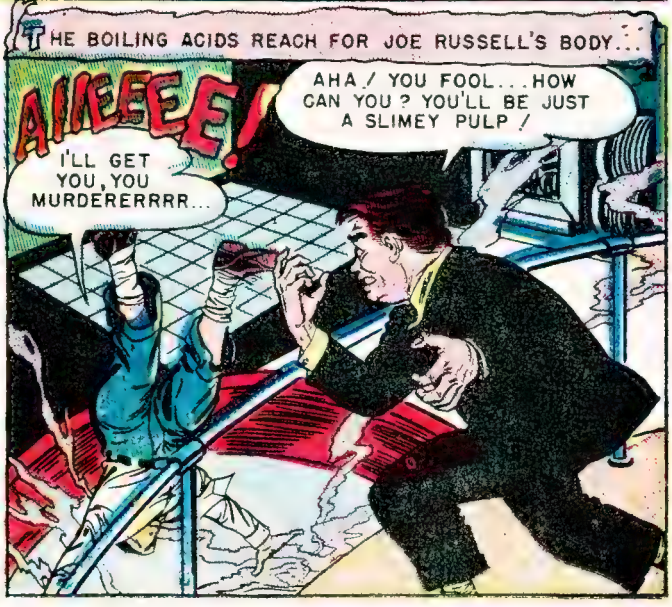
WHEN A MAN IS MURDERED...WHAT TERRIBLE SHAPES CAN HE ASSUME IF HE RETURNS FOR REVENGE ? NOT ALL PHANTOMS AND GHOSTS ARE MADE OF SOLID SKELETONS OR CLOUD-LIKE ETHER. NO.. SOMETIMES A SPIRIT COMES BACK IN EVEN MORE HORRID FORM, AND EVEN THE BOLDEST KILLER WOULD SHRINK IN TERROR WHEN HE WRESTLES WITH A WRAITH LIKE ...

"THE PAPER GHOST"

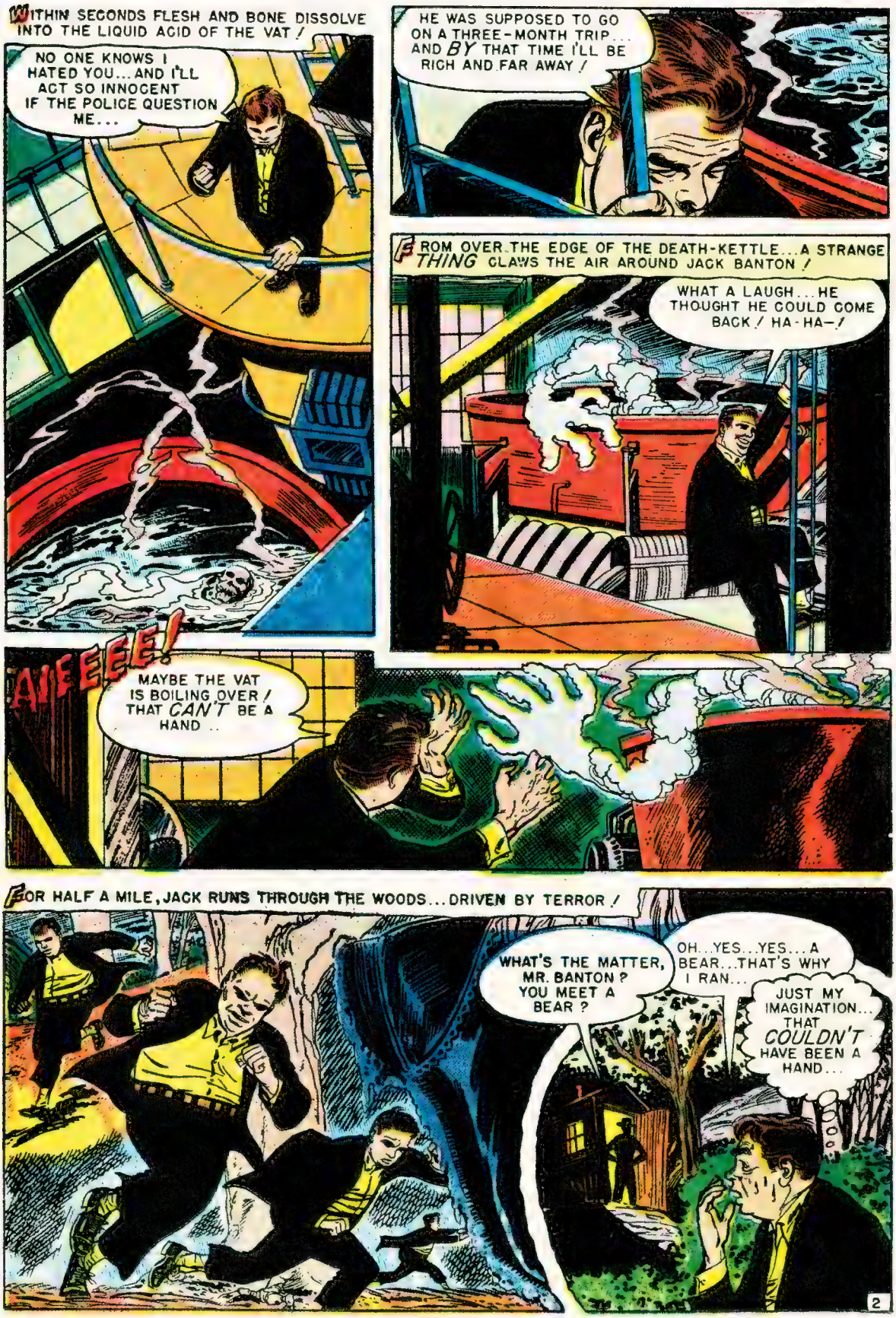


ALONE IN A NORTHERN PAPER MILL, HALF OWNER JACK BANTON SNEAKS UP BEHIND HIS PARTNER, JOE RUSSELL...

THE BOILING ACIDS REACH FOR JOE RUSSELL'S BODY...



Beware #6, November 1953. Pencils: John Belfi; inks: Al Tyler. Publisher: Trojan Magazines.


WITHIN SECONDS FLESH AND BONE DISSOLVE INTO THE LIQUID ACID OF THE VAT /
NO ONE KNOWS I HATED YOU... AND I'LL ACT SO INNOCENT IF THE POLICE QUESTION ME...
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO GO ON A THREE-MONTH TRIP... AND BY THAT TIME I'LL BE RICH AND FAR AWAY /
FROM OVER THE EDGE OF THE DEATH-KETTLE... A STRANGE THING CLAWS THE AIR AROUND JACK BANTON /
WHAT A LAUGH... HE THOUGHT HE COULD COME BACK / HA-HA-/
AIEEEE!
MAYBE THE VAT IS BOILING OVER / THAT CAN'T BE A HAND ..
FOR HALF A MILE, JACK RUNS THROUGH THE WOODS... DRIVEN BY TERROR /
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MR. BANTON? YOU MEET A BEAR?
OH...YES...YES... A BEAR...THAT'S WHY I RAN...
JUST MY IMAGINATION... THAT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN A HAND...
2

MR. RUSSELL TOOK THE TRAIN INTO TOWN, DIDN'T HE ? FOR HIS VACATION...
YES, JOE RUSSELL'S ON A LONG VACATION. HE WORKED HARD TO DESERVE IT.
A PERFECT ALIBI .AND I'LL STAY AWAY FROM THAT VAT...
AFTER THREE DAYS, THE COOL AND ALMOST-SOLID PULP IS GROUND BETWEEN HUGE ROLLERS AND MILES OF PAPER ARE MADE.
THAT'S THE LAST OF JOE RUSSELL ..HE CAN'T REACH ME NOW /
SORT OF INTERESTING THEY'LL MAKE HUNDREDS OF PRODUCTS FROM THIS PAPER..
SUDDENLY...AN INHUMAN SCREAM COMES FROM THE ROLLERS AS THEY JAM.
AIEEEEEEEEEEIIAA
WHAT'S THAT?
HISSING LIKE A LIVE THING, THE PAPER SHAPES INTO...JOE RUSSELL'S GHOST!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT...I DON'T...
STOP THE ROLLERS / THE PAPER'S STUCK / THE SWITCH, MAN—/
JACK RUNS FOR HIS LIFE...THE ROLLERS STOP. THE PAPER COLLAPSES..
THANKS... YOU SAVED ME /
QUEEREST THING I EVER SAW HAPPEN TO A PILE OF PAPER! IT LOOKED LIKE...
FORGET YOUR IMAGINATION! LET'S GET TO WORK...IT'S ONLY PAPER!
IN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS... JACK KEEPS SEEING HANDS AND SKULLS THAT REACH FOR HIM...
THEY AREN'T REAL... I MUST BE GOING MAD / GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE...

JACK SACRIFICES THE MILL TO THE FIRST BUYER...

I'LL TAKE *ANY* DEPOSIT / YOU CAN SEND ME THE REST WHEN MY PARTNER... NO / I'LL WRITE YOU FROM THE CITY...

SOMETHING'S HAUNTING THIS MAN.. OR HE'S CRAZY. BUT THE MILL IS A BARGAIN

HIS MONEY ALMOST GONE... AFTER THREE WEEKS IN THE CITY JACK BANTON PICKS UP A PAPER TO TRY TO FIND A JOB...

I CAN'T SLEEP, CAN'T EAT. I'LL TAKE A JOB WITH HEAVY WORK... MAYBE I'LL GET TIRED AND REST. ALL I DREAM ABOUT ARE THOSE PAPER HANDS...

AS JACK READS, TWO LONG, THIN HANDS SEEM TO RISE FROM THE PAPER'S PAGES...

MAYBE IF I CAN FIND A JOB...I WON'T GO CRAZY / I ALWAYS IMAGINE I SEE... *HANDS!*

AIEE... HE'S AFTER ME /

THE WIND IS ALMOST BLOWING THAT POOR DERELICT OVER...

COURAGE, MAN / THAT NEWSPAPER ALMOST TOOK YOUR BREATH AWAY, EH? IT'S WINDY, TODAY.

YES...JUST THE WIND JUST A NEWSPAPER. THANK YOU...

HERE...GET YOURSELF SOME FOOD AND SOME SLEEP. YOU LOOK LIKE YOU NEED BOTH /

IF MY BRAIN DOESN'T STOP SEEING THINGS I'LL GO INSANE /

GARAGE

HOTEL

AT THE HOTEL...

GET SOME SLEEP IN THIS NICE ROOM. JUST HAD IT FRESHLY DECORATED.

I'VE GOT TO FORGET PAPER GHOSTS. GOT TO....

THAT NIGHT, AS JACK SLEEPS, ONE WALL OF THE NEWLY-PAPERED ROOM STARTS TO TREMBLE...
OOOHHH...
I'M DREAMING IT AGAIN...OR AM I AWAKE ?
LET ME GO!
YOU DONT EXIST
YOU CAN'T
EXIST!
I TORE IT TO PIECES... I GOT AWAY! HA HA HA
GET OUT OF HERE, YOU CRAZY DRUNK! SCRAM!
AT AN ALL-NIGHT CAFETERIA...
I GOT AWAY! I'M STILL ALIVE! I NEED A DRINK....
FROM THE PAPER CUP...A PAPER HAND SHOOTS OUT!
AGGHH!
HIS BODY IS EVEN IN THIS CUP...
THAT GUY'S CHOKING ON A DRINK OF WATER!
5

NUTTY AS A SQUIRREL'S NEST... HE JUST KEPT MOANING ABOUT HIS PARTNER'S PAPER HAND!
I'M GOING TO THE POLICE I'LL CONFESS...
AT A NEARBY POLICE STATION... THE DESK SERGEANT CAN'T UNDERSTAND JACK'S BABBLED STORY OF TERROR..
PAPER HANDS... PAPER BODIES... PAPER SKULLS!! YOU'VE GOT TO SAVE ME!
I'LL LOCK THIS DRUNK UP FOR THE NIGHT.. THE POOR STIFF.
POLICE
TURNKEY! GIVE HIM CELL NO. 3!
LED AWAY AND LOCKED UP, JACK GETS ONE FINAL "FAVOR"...
HERE! READ THIS IF YOU CAN'T SLEEP!
NO!! —NOT A NEWSPAPER...
UNSEEN BY THE POLICE... A TERRIBLE "PAPER" TRAGEDY TAKES PLACE...
AGGHH! AHHHH...
THAT DRUNK SOUNDS LIKE HE'S GOT A BAD COLD! MAYBE I'D BETTER HELP...
AGGHH
WITHIN THE CELL... ALL IS SUDDENLY QUIET!
GUESS HE FELL ASLEEP.. WE'LL GET HIS CRAZY STORY STRAIGHT IN THE MORNING.
BUT IN THE MORNING, THE COLD AND LIFELESS BODY OF JACK BANTON HOLDS WITHIN ITS BRAIN AND TONGUE A MYSTERY THAT SHALL NEVER BE SOLVED....
HE WOUND THE NEWSPAPER AROUND HIS THROAT... A SUICIDE, I GUESS. BUT HOW...?
I WONDER... LAST NIGHT HE BABBLED ABOUT A PAPER GHOST. I WONDER...
THE END

You're Nick Mangoti, hired killer! You've done many horrible things you'd like to forget! But what magic can erase the searing, terrifying image of what happened one night in a Manhattan hotel when you delivered a flaming message of Death to your four best friends! But there was—

The FIFTH CORPSE

B-1830

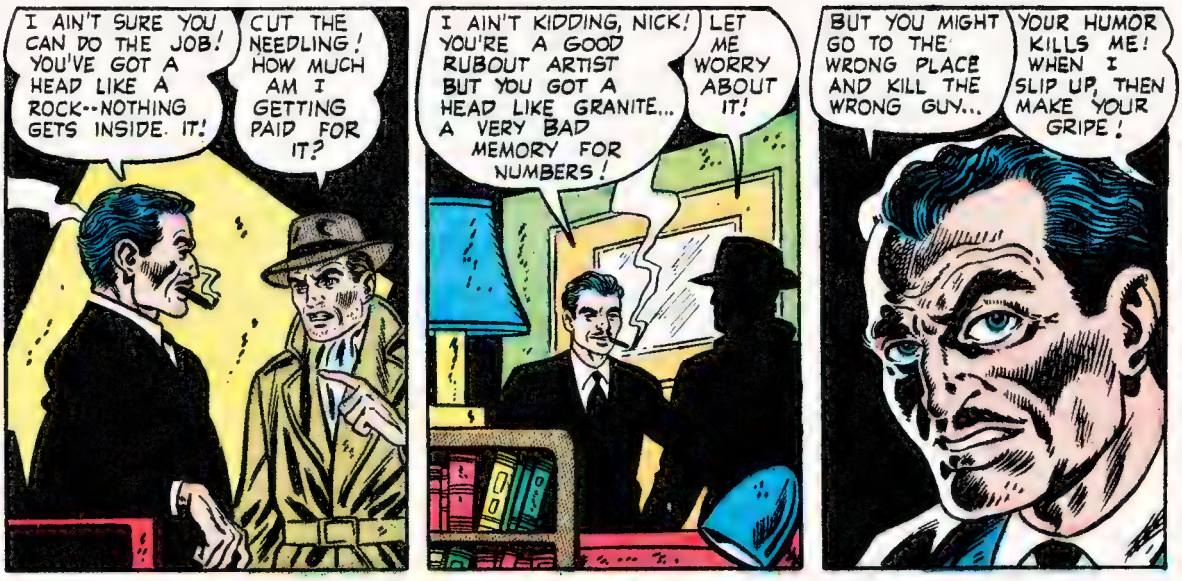
YOU'RE NICK MANGOTI AND LIFE IS CHEAP TO YOU... YOU'LL KILL ANYBODY FOR A PRICE! SOMETIMES A CHEAP PRICE, DEPENDING ON HOW HUNGRY YOU ARE! ONCE YOU RUBBED OUT AN OLD LADY FOR $35!

IF YOU COULD HAVE GOTTEN MORE, YOU'D HAVE TAKEN IT BUT $35 WAS ALL THE TRAFFIC COULD BEAR! LUCKY GARRIS NEVER HANDED OVER A BUCK HE COULD KEEP FOR HIMSELF!

THAT'S GARRIS AT THE TABLE! YOU NEVER CARED FOR HIM... HE WAS A SARCASTIC LOUSE! HE ALWAYS MADE FUN OF YOU!

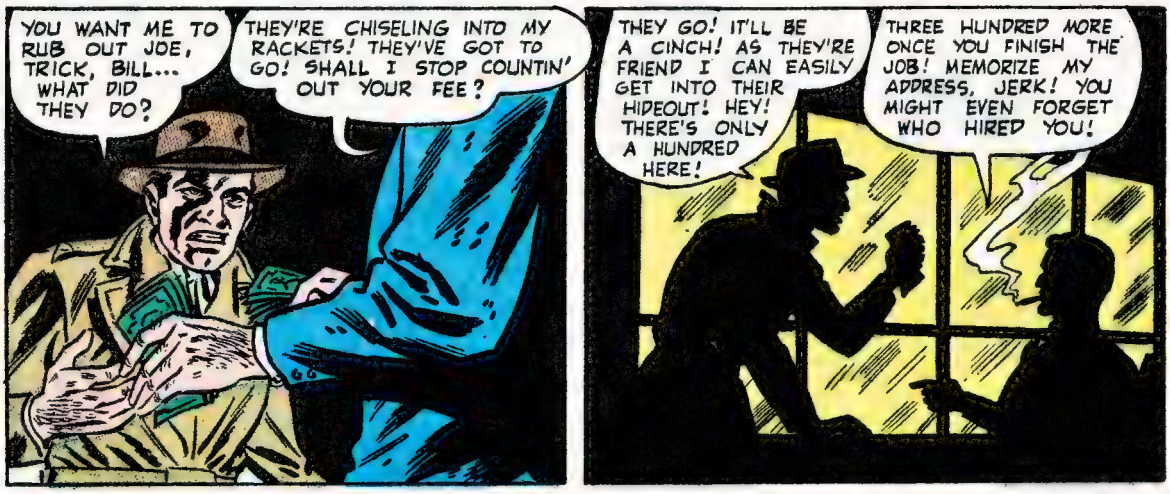
SO YOU GOT HERE, EH, NICK! I'M SURPRISED! YOU USUALLY FORGET SOMETHING AS SOON AS IT'S TOLD TO YOU!
I DON'T FORGET NO CHANCE TO DO A JOB, GARRIS! STOMACH DON'T LET ME FORGET!

The Unseen #14, April 1954. Art: Rocco Mastroserio. Publisher: Standard.


I AIN'T SURE YOU CAN DO THE JOB! YOU'VE GOT A HEAD LIKE A ROCK--NOTHING GETS INSIDE IT!
CUT THE NEEDLING! HOW MUCH AM I GETTING PAID FOR IT?
I AIN'T KIDDING, NICK! YOU'RE A GOOD RUBOUT ARTIST BUT YOU GOT A HEAD LIKE GRANITE... A VERY BAD MEMORY FOR NUMBERS!
LET ME WORRY ABOUT IT!
BUT YOU MIGHT GO TO THE WRONG PLACE AND KILL THE WRONG GUY...
YOUR HUMOR KILLS ME! WHEN I SLIP UP, THEN MAKE YOUR GRIPE!

YOU'RE NOT PREPARED FOR THE NAMES GARRIS THROWS AT YOU...JOE LESKA, TRICK MORAN, BILL HUTCHINS AND SAM DORNE, YOUR BEST FRIENDS!

WELL, WHAT'S THE ANSWER? BUMP OFF FOUR PALS OR STOP EATING FOR A WEEK? YOU LICK YOUR LIPS NERVOUSLY AND MAKE UP YOUR MIND...


YOU WANT ME TO RUB OUT JOE, TRICK, BILL... WHAT DID THEY DO?
THEY'RE CHISELING INTO MY RACKETS! THEY'VE GOT TO GO! SHALL I STOP COUNTIN' OUT YOUR FEE?
THEY GO! IT'LL BE A CINCH! AS THEY'RE FRIEND I CAN EASILY GET INTO THEIR HIDEOUT! HEY! THERE'S ONLY A HUNDRED HERE!
THREE HUNDRED MORE ONCE YOU FINISH THE JOB! MEMORIZE MY ADDRESS, JERK! YOU MIGHT EVEN FORGET WHO HIRED YOU!

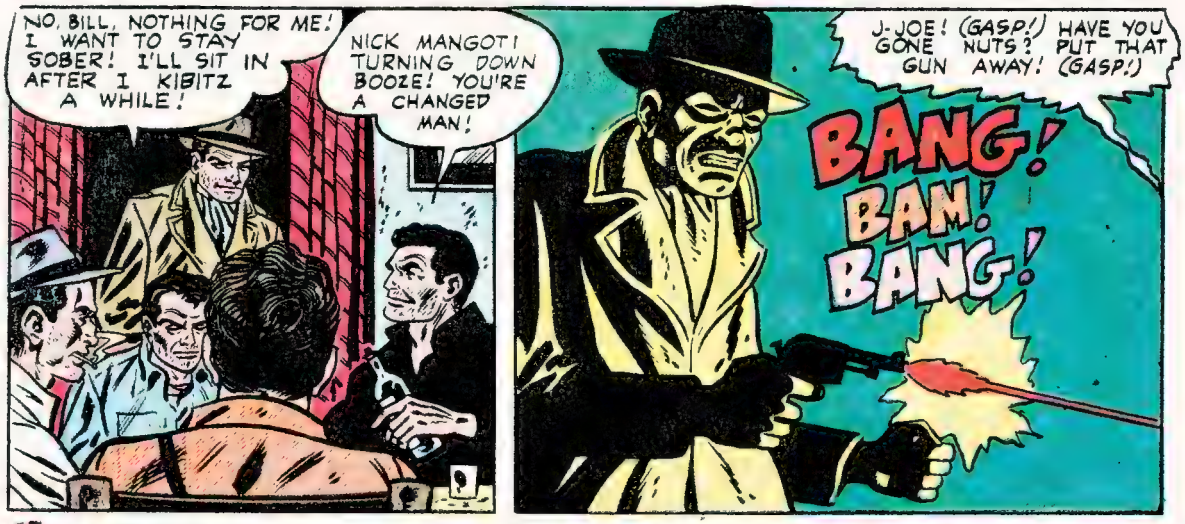
HE'S NOT KIDDING! YOUR MEMORY'S THE WORLD'S WORST! YOU CAN'T REMEMBER A THING...BUT TONIGHT YOU WILL NEVER FORGET!

YOU MAKE SURE NOBODY SEES YOU SNEAK UPSTAIRS. JOE LESKA GREETS YOU LIKE A LONG LOST BROTHER...

IT'S A NICE THING, HAVING TO KILL YOUR OWN PALS TO STAY ALIVE! BUT THEY'D DO THE SAME TO ME!
WELL, WELL, THE AMNESIA KID! DID YOU FORGET US, NICK...WITH YOU IT COULD HAPPEN!
I KNOW, JOE! I GOT THE WORST MEMORY...I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER MY NAME! BUT I DO REMEMBER MY FRIENDS! IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU!

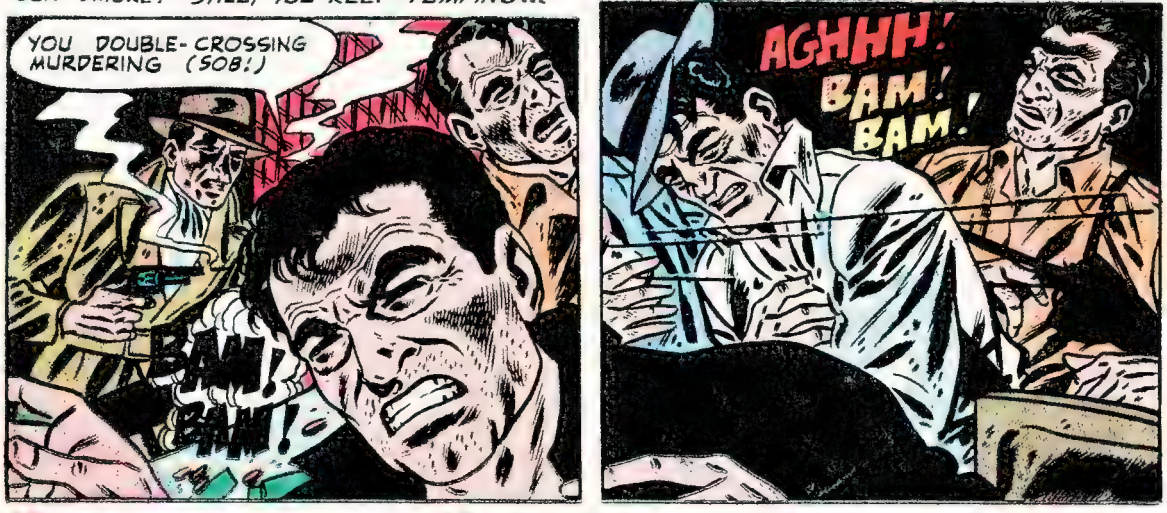
IT'S GOOD THEY CAN'T READ YOUR MIND.. YOU'D GET A BELLY FULL OF LEAD... NOT DRINKS!

THEY DON'T KNOW HOW CHANGED! I PULL MY ROD AND INCHES FROM JOE AND BILL'S BACK, I START BLASTING AWAY!


NO, BILL, NOTHING FOR ME! I WANT TO STAY SOBER! I'LL SIT IN AFTER I KIBITZ A WHILE!
NICK MANGOT! TURNING DOWN BOOZE! YOU'RE A CHANGED MAN!
J-JOE! (GASP!) HAVE YOU GONE NUTS? PUT THAT GUN AWAY! (GASP!)
BANG! BAM! BANG!

YOU WON'T STOP PULLING THE TRIGGER UNTIL THEY'RE ALL LYING ON THE FLOOR. THE ROOM FILLS WITH GUN SMOKE! STILL, YOU KEEP PUMPING...

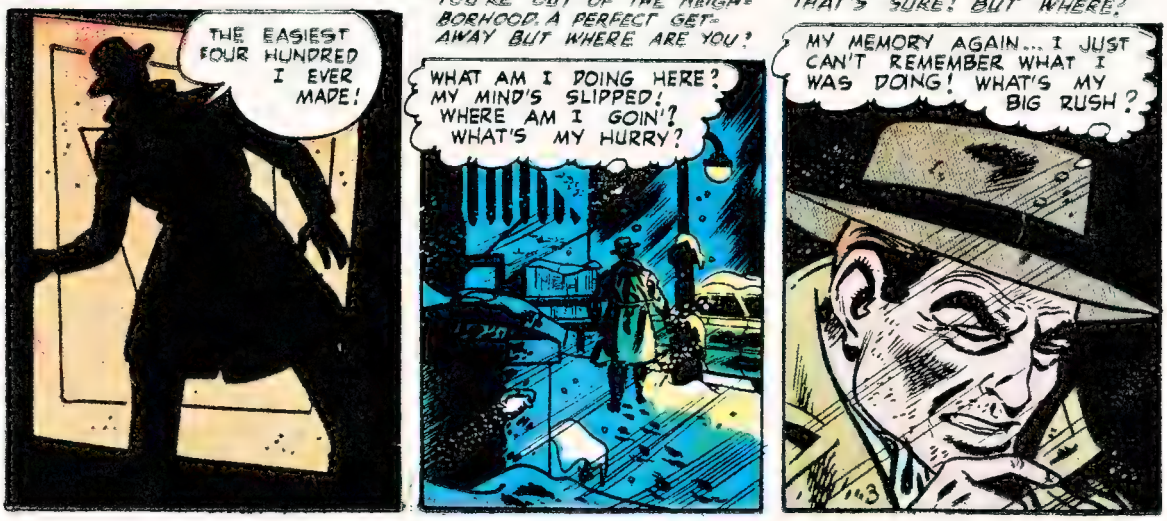
THEY GO FOR THEIR RODS BUT THEY DON'T HAVE A CHANCE...



YOU WIPE EVERYTHING CAREFULLY AND MAKE A FAST GETAWAY...

YOU REACH THE STREET SAFELY. IN TEN MINUTES YOU'RE OUT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. A PERFECT GET-AWAY BUT WHERE ARE YOU?

YOU CAME FROM SOMEWHERE... YOU'RE GOING SOMEWHERE, THAT'S SURE! BUT WHERE?


THE EASIEST FOUR HUNDRED I EVER MADE!
WHAT AM I DOING HERE? MY MIND'S SLIPPED! WHERE AM I GOIN'? WHAT'S MY HURRY?
MY MEMORY AGAIN... I JUST CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT I WAS DOING! WHAT'S MY BIG RUSH?

A--A GUN-- (GASP!) W-WHAT'S A GUN DOING IN MY POCKET?
SUDDENLY IT DAWNS ON YOU THAT YOU KNOW FROM NOTHING! YOUR MIND'S BLACKED OUT!
YOU'RE A HIRED KILLER BUT YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN WHO HIRED YOU OR WHERE HE LIVES!
HOLY SUFFERING CATS! I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM! I'VE GOT NO MEMORY! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?
WHAT DO YOU DO FOR AMNESIA? HOW DO YOU GET YOUR MEMORY BACK? MAYBE I'VE DONE SOMETHING THE COPS WANT ME FOR!
HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST THE COPS UNLESS I KNOW WHAT I'VE DONE? I GOTTA GET MY BRAIN WORKIN' AGAIN! I'LL GET SOME COFFEE!
BUT YOU'RE STILL IN A MESS! YOU FORGET EVERYTHING! THE PRICE OF THE DRINK, THE FOOD... YOU EVEN FORGET TO EAT!
HEY, BUD! ARE YOU NUTS? YOU'VE ALREADY GOT A FULL TRAY OF FOOD!
I HAVE?
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? I DON'T REMEMBER A THING FROM ONE MOMENT TO THE NEXT!
YOU ORDER COFFEE AFTER COFFEE, TO CUDGEL YOUR BRAIN! NO HELP.. YOU TRY FOOD, DRINK, ASPIRINS, BENZEDRINE... NOTHING WORKS! YOU CAN'T REMEMBER A THING...
MAYBE I'M NUTS! MAYBE MY BRAIN'S SNAPPED! A DOCTOR COULD TELL ME (GASP!) I'VE GOT TO SEE A DOCTOR!

YOU LOOK UP THE NEAREST DOCTOR AND RING HIS BELL REPEATEDLY BEFORE A WOMAN APPEARS..

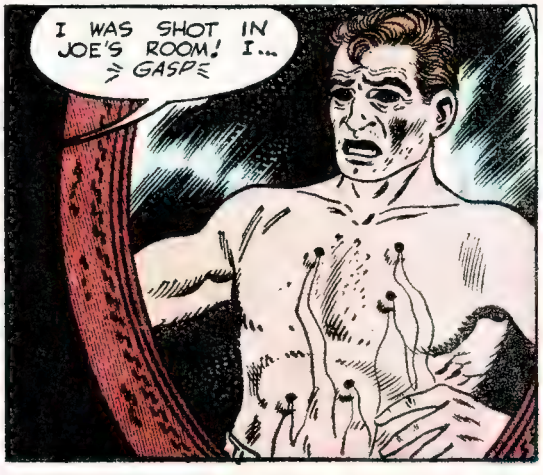
CAN'T YOU READ THE SIGN? IT'S AFTER OFFICE HOURS... DOCTOR CAN'T SEE ANYONE EXCEPT IN AN EMERGENCY!
THIS IS AN EMERGENCY! I GOTTA SEE HIM! GET OUT OF MY WAY! GASP!
DR. AMES HOURS

DOC! HELP ME! I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM OR WHERE I'M GOING! YOU GOTTA CURE ME... FAST!
THERE ARE NO FAST CURES FOR AMNESIA! STRIP TO THE WAIST!

YOU STRIP QUICKLY, NOT WITHOUT ANNOYANCE...

SUDDENLY, YOU GET SCARED! WHY SHOULD THE DOCTOR RUN AS IF FROM A GH— YOU CAN'T FINISH THE WORD! WITH A SICK FEELING, YOU WHIRL...

YOU SEE YOURSELF RIDDLED WITH BULLETS FROM THE WAIST DOWN! YOU REMEMBER TRICK MORAN AND SAM DORNE HAD GONE FOR THEIR GUNS WHEN YOU STARTED PUMPING! IT WASN'T AMNESIA!



YOU'RE NICK MANGOTI. YOU'VE GOT A POOR MEMORY. YOU CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE DEAD!

THE END

THADDEUS STEVENS THOUGHT HIS COLLECTION WAS COMPLETE. BUT THEN HE FOUND THE STRANGEST TROPHY OF THEM ALL. BUT HE COULDN'T APPRECIATE IT!
The COLLECTOR
THIS WAS A TYPICAL AFTERNOON AT THE HOME OF INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN HUNTER THADDEUS STEVENS...
HMMM... A PYGMY RHINO... WHITE ELEPHANT... WHY THIS IS THE MOST FABULOUS COLLECTION OF RARE ANIMALS I'VE EVER SEEN!
MORE EXTENSIVE THAN YOU'LL FIND IN ANY MUSEUM!
I SHOT, STUFFED, AND MOUNTED THEM ALL MYSELF. BUT LIFE'S PRETTY BORING NOW THAT THERE ARE NO NEW SPECIMENS I CAN ADD!

Chamber of Chills Magazine #17, May 1953. Art: Joe Certa. Publisher: Harvey.

YES, LIFE *WAS* DULL FOR THADDEUS STEVENS. THAT IS -- UNTIL ONE DAY...

HMMM...RUMORS OF STRANGE, NEW ANIMAL SPECIMENS IN THE UNEXPLORED AREAS OF THE UPPER UBANGI COUNTRY. PROBABLY PURE IMAGINATION, BUT IF THERE'S ANYTHING I HAVEN'T BAGGED YET, I WANT A SHOT AT IT!

NOW HERE WAS A CHANCE FOR THADDEUS STEVENS. SO HE PACKED ALL HE NEEDED AND SET OUT FOR THE JUNGLE...

NO SIGN OF RARE ANIMALS SO FAR. MIGHT AS WELL PUSH ON AHEAD SO LONG AS I'M HERE!

HE STRUGGLED THROUGH THE THICK JUNGLE GROWTH... AND THEN SUDDENLY HE STOPPED!

THAT STRANGE POOL...IT...IT SEEMS *ALIVE!* THE LIQUID TURNING AND WRITHING ON ITSELF. WHAT... WHAT CAN IT MEAN?

THADDEUS STEVENS WATCHED, CAUTIOUSLY, CAREFULLY... THEN A BIRD FELL INTO THE POOL, AND AS IT FLEW OUT...

WHY...IT...IT'S ANOTHER BIRD! ALIKE... AND YET SO HORRIBLY *UNLIKE* THE ONE THAT FELL IN!

THAT POOL MUST CONTAIN THE *ESSENCE OF LIFE*...THE STUFF FROM WHICH LIFE FIRST ROSE MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO! IT... IT'S PROBABLY THE LAST SUCH POOL IN EXISTENCE ANYWHERE ON EARTH!

IT.. IT CREATES LIFE..STRANGE GROTESQUE IMAGES OF WHATEVER COMES INTO CONTACT WITH IT! I CAN... WHY...WHAT AN IDEA! IT... IT'S *STUPENDOUS!*

THADDEUS STEVENS OWNED A KEEN MIND. THAT'S WHY HE DID SO WELL...THAT'S WHY HE THOUGHT OF THE PLAN...

A PERFECT SPECIMEN! I'LL HAVE TO TIE HIM AND HANDLE HIM CAREFULLY, TO MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T *ESCAPE!*

AND SOON, AT THE BRINK OF THE POOL...

IN YOU GO!

HE WAITED SHORT MOMENTS...

ANOTHER SECOND AND THAT STRANGE ANTELOPE-LIKE BEING WILL BE LOPING OUT OF THE POOL!

AND EVEN BEFORE THE NEW CREATURE COULD TASTE LIFE...

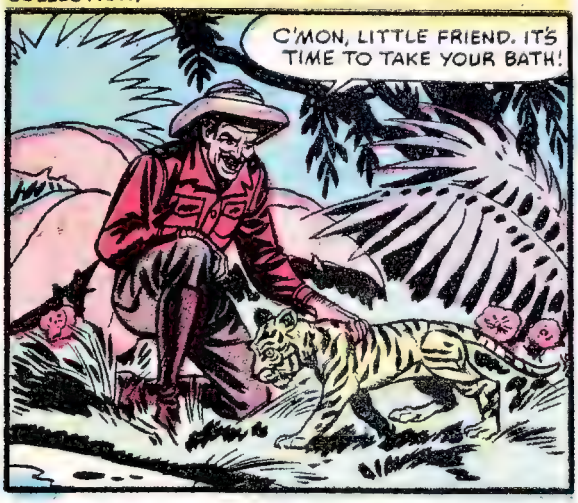
THE *FIRST* SPECIMEN IN MY NEW COLLECTION!

BLAMM!

YES, THAT WAS ONLY THE FIRST SPECIMEN. THE WEIRD COLLECTION KEPT GROWING BY HORRIBLE LEAPS AND BOUNDS... THE POOL WAS AN ENDLESS STREAM OF LIFE... AND OF *DEATH!*

JUST WAIT TILL I BRING *THESE* HOME! I'LL MAKE THE WORLD SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE! IT'LL BE THE GREATEST COLLECTION OF ALL TIME!

BUT THADDEUS STEVENS' APPETITE WAS LARGE... VERY LARGE. HE JUST *HAD* TO ADD TO HIS COLLECTION!



YES, THE CUB LET GO...

AND IT WAS *THADDEUS STEVENS* WHO GOT THE BATH!

HE STAGGERED TO THE EDGE OF THE POOL. HE FELT SHARP TERROR STAB HIS HEART...AND HE LOOKED BEHIND HIM!

HE RAN...HE RAN WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH!

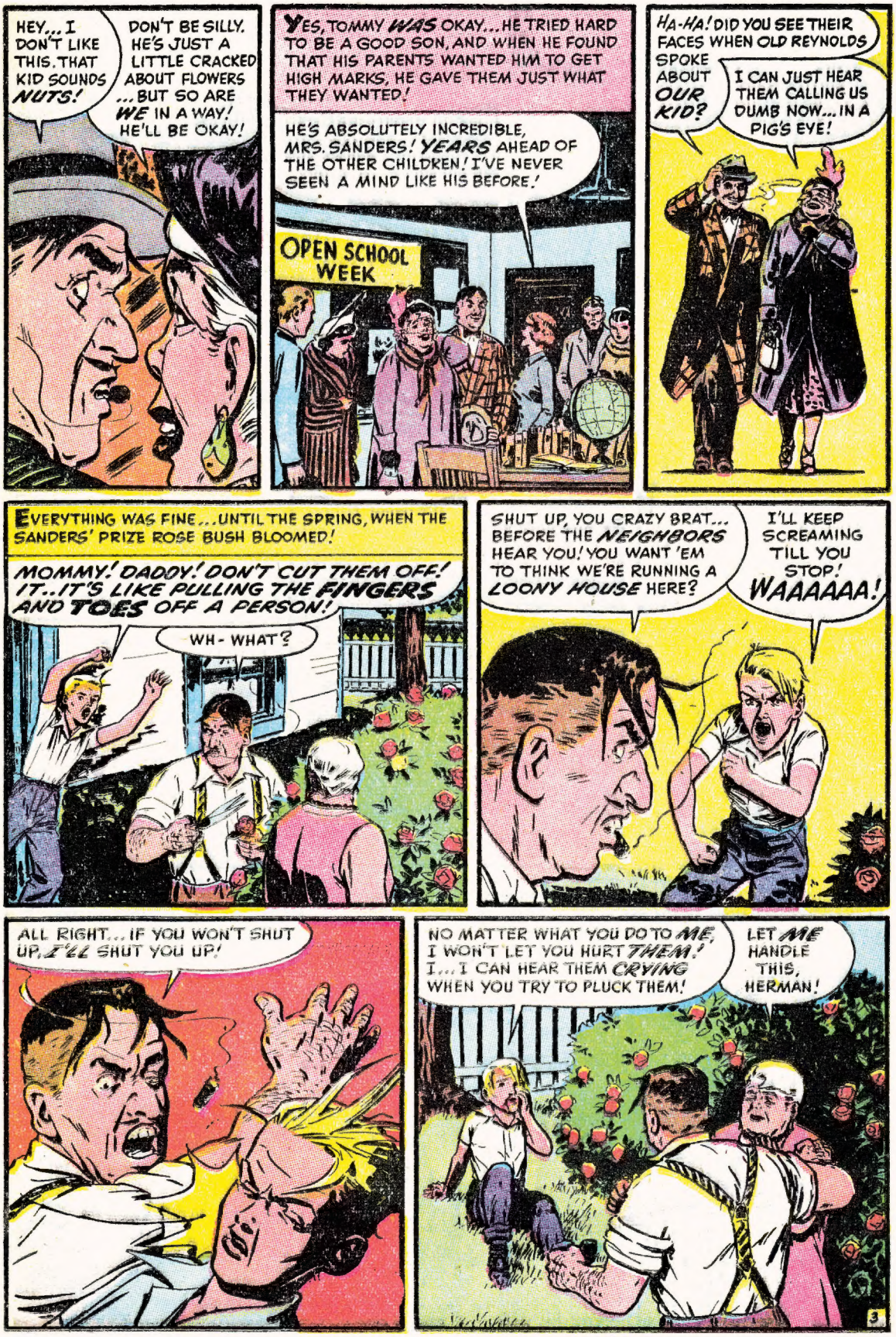
HE RAN WITH ALL HIS SOUL!

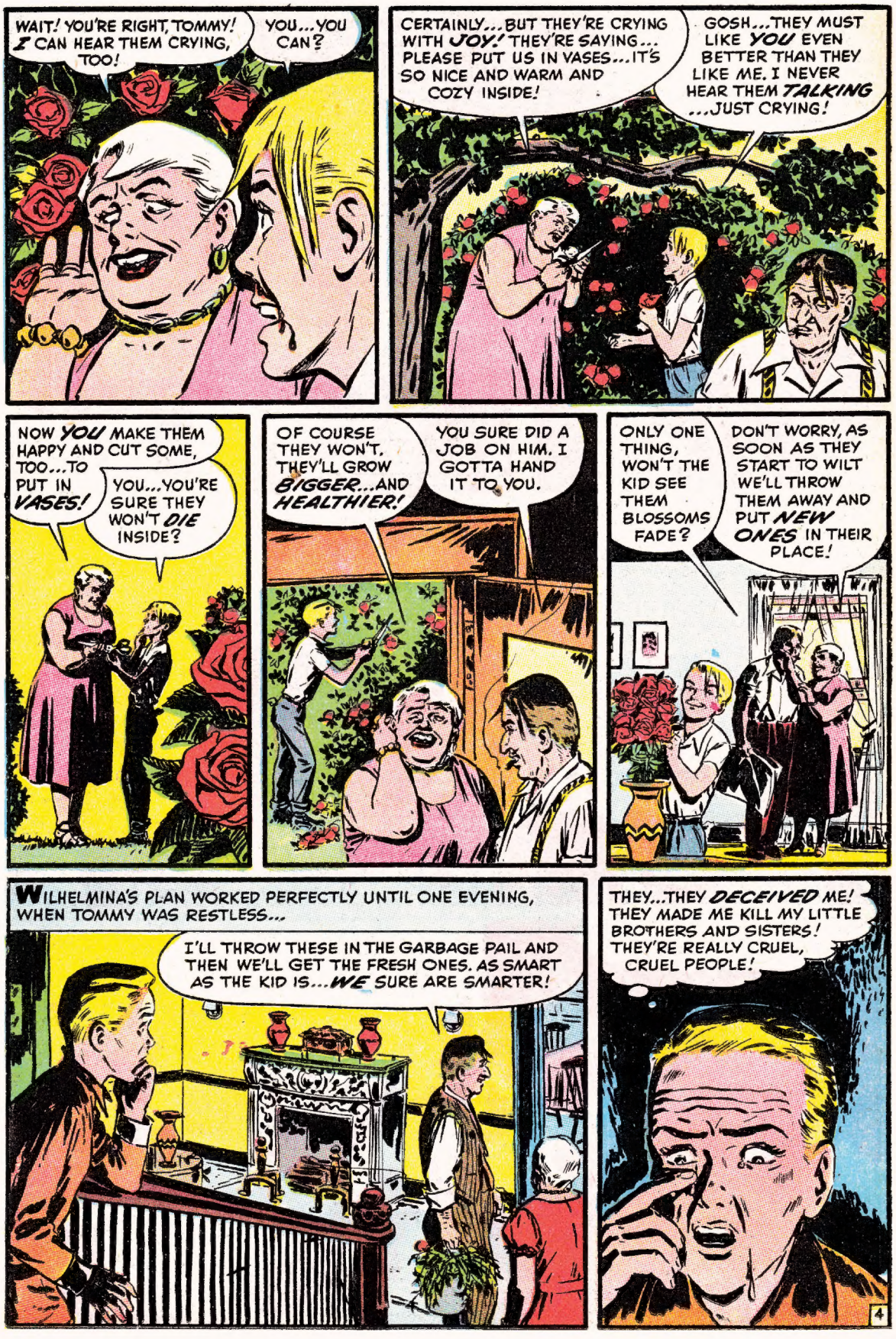
BUT HE DIDN'T RUN FAST ENOUGH!
LIKE...ME...IN EVERY RESPECT!
YES...IT WAS LIKE THADDEUS STEVENS IN EVERY RESPECT...EVEN TO ITS SOUL!
THE END
5

ROSES ARE RED...AND BLOOD IS RED...AND WHEN YOU HATE HARD ENOUGH YOU SEE RED, TOO. LITTLE TOMMY GOT THEM ALL MIXED UP WHEN HE HEARD THE BLOSSOMS SOBBING. HE DIDN'T BELIEVE...
A ROSE IS A ROSE
IT WAS VISITING DAY AT THE CRESTWOOD ORPHANAGE, AND EACH LITTLE FACE WAS BRIGHT WITH HOPE... EXCEPT ONE!
HOW COULD ANYONE WANTING TO BE A PARENT RESIST A SINGLE ONE OF THEM?
EXCEPT TOMMY, MISS HUTCHINS. PEOPLE WANT HEALTHY, HAPPY CHILDREN...NOT A STRANGE, SENSITIVE BOY LIKE HIM!
POOR TOMMY! EVERYONE FELT SORRY FOR HIM... BUT A LITTLE AFRAID OF WHAT WENT ON BEHIND THOSE EYES! YET...THIS WAS TO BE HIS LUCKY DAY...
REMEMBER, HERMAN... HE'S GOTTA BE REAL SMART! WE WANNA SHOW THOSE STUCK-UP NEIGHBORS A THING OR TWO!
YOU BET, WILHELMINA. WE GOT THE BEST ROSE GARDEN ON WILLOW PLACE, AND NOW WE'LL HAVE THE SMARTEST BRAT, TOO!
CRESTWOOD ORPHANAGE

Tomb of Terror #10, July 1953. Artist: Al Eadeh. Publisher: Harvey.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING... I MEAN WE WANT A KID THAT'S GOT A LOT ON THE BALL IN THE... ER... MENTAL DEPARTMENT, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!
I SEE. YOU... UH... PUT A PREMIUM ON INTELLIGENCE?
YEH, THAT'S IT! WHO'S THE BRAINIEST KID IN THE OUTFIT?
WELL, LITTLE TOMMY IS REALLY QUITE PHENOMENAL. AN IQ OVER 200!
HOWEVER, HE'S RATHER ODD! NOT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH HIM, BUT HE'S FUNNY ABOUT BIRDS AND FLOWERS... TREATS THEM AS IF THEY WERE LITTLE CHILDREN!
HE PROBABLY IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH THEM... AND GIVES THEM THE LOVE HE REALLY WANTS OTHERS TO GIVE HIM!
I GETCHA! BUT WE'VE GOT JUST THE THING FOR HIM! YOU SHOULD SEE OUR ROSE GARDEN!
TAKE HIM, HERMAN! I CAN JUST SEE THEM SNOOTY NEIGHBORS WHEN HE GETS THE HIGHEST MARK IN THE CLASS. THEY WON'T CALL US STUPID THEN!
THE PAPERS WERE SIGNED, AND HERMAN AND WILHELMINA DROVE OFF WITH THEIR "BARGAIN!"
I'M REALLY VERY GRATEFUL TO BOTH OF YOU, MOMMY AND DADDY! I HOPE I LIVE UP TO ALL YOUR EXPECTATIONS.
GET THE LINGO, WILHELMINA! JUST WAIT TILL THEY GET A LOAD OF THIS!
I UNDERSTAND YOU LIKE FLOWERS, TOMMY?
AND THEY LIKE ME, TOO! I CAN TELL BY THE WAY THEY MAKE SOUNDS WHEN I COME NEAR THEM!
HUH?


HEY... I DON'T LIKE THIS. THAT KID SOUNDS NUTS!
DON'T BE SILLY. HE'S JUST A LITTLE CRACKED ABOUT FLOWERS ... BUT SO ARE WE IN A WAY! HE'LL BE OKAY!
YES, TOMMY WAS OKAY... HE TRIED HARD TO BE A GOOD SON, AND WHEN HE FOUND THAT HIS PARENTS WANTED HIM TO GET HIGH MARKS, HE GAVE THEM JUST WHAT THEY WANTED!
HE'S ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE, MRS. SANDERS! YEARS AHEAD OF THE OTHER CHILDREN! I'VE NEVER SEEN A MIND LIKE HIS BEFORE!
OPEN SCHOOL WEEK
HA-HA! DID YOU SEE THEIR FACES WHEN OLD REYNOLDS SPOKE ABOUT OUR KID?
I CAN JUST HEAR THEM CALLING US DUMB NOW... IN A PIG'S EYE!
EVERYTHING WAS FINE... UNTIL THE SPRING, WHEN THE SANDERS' PRIZE ROSE BUSH BLOOMED!
MOMMY! DADDY! DON'T CUT THEM OFF! IT..IT'S LIKE PULLING THE FINGERS AND TOES OFF A PERSON!
WH- WHAT?
SHUT UP, YOU CRAZY BRAT... BEFORE THE NEIGHBORS HEAR YOU! YOU WANT 'EM TO THINK WE'RE RUNNING A LOONY HOUSE HERE?
I'LL KEEP SCREAMING TILL YOU STOP! WAAAAAA!
ALL RIGHT... IF YOU WON'T SHUT UP, I'LL SHUT YOU UP!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO ME, I WON'T LET YOU HURT THEM! I... I CAN HEAR THEM CRYING WHEN YOU TRY TO PLUCK THEM!
LET ME HANDLE THIS, HERMAN!
3


WAIT! YOU'RE RIGHT, TOMMY! I CAN HEAR THEM CRYING, TOO!
YOU...YOU CAN?
CERTAINLY...BUT THEY'RE CRYING WITH JOY! THEY'RE SAYING... PLEASE PUT US IN VASES...IT'S SO NICE AND WARM AND COZY INSIDE!
GOSH...THEY MUST LIKE YOU EVEN BETTER THAN THEY LIKE ME. I NEVER HEAR THEM TALKING ...JUST CRYING!
NOW YOU MAKE THEM HAPPY AND CUT SOME, TOO...TO PUT IN VASES!
YOU...YOU'RE SURE THEY WON'T DIE INSIDE?
OF COURSE THEY WON'T. THEY'LL GROW BIGGER...AND HEALTHIER!
YOU SURE DID A JOB ON HIM. I GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU.
ONLY ONE THING, WON'T THE KID SEE THEM BLOSSOMS FADE?
DON'T WORRY, AS SOON AS THEY START TO WILT WE'LL THROW THEM AWAY AND PUT NEW ONES IN THEIR PLACE!
WILHELMINA'S PLAN WORKED PERFECTLY UNTIL ONE EVENING, WHEN TOMMY WAS RESTLESS...
I'LL THROW THESE IN THE GARBAGE PAIL AND THEN WE'LL GET THE FRESH ONES. AS SMART AS THE KID IS...WE SURE ARE SMARTER!
THEY...THEY DECEIVED ME! THEY MADE ME KILL MY LITTLE BROTHERS AND SISTERS! THEY'RE REALLY CRUEL, CRUEL PEOPLE!
4

TOMMY DIDN'T GO TO SLEEP THEN. HE COULDN'T! BESIDES, HE HAD SOMETHING TO FIND...
HE LOOKED EVERYWHERE FOR IT...
UNTIL FINALLY...
I'VE FOUND IT!
AND THEN TOMMY MADE USE OF HIS NEW-FOUND POSSESSION...
ARGGGGGGG
GGGGGGG